COURSE of RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Institute of the Brothers of the
Christian Schools

The Catechist's Manual

BRIEF COURSE

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TO

HIS EMINENCE

JOHN CARDINAL FARLEY

ARCHBISHOP OF NEW YORK

DEVOTED PATRON

OF THE

ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

IN NEW YORK

THIS BOOK IS

BY HIS GRACIOUS PERMISSION

MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

BRIEF OF HIS HOLINESS POPE PIUS X.

To Our Dear Son, Brother Gabriel Marie, Superior-General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The glorious title of Apostles of the Catechism, by which in an audience of October 10, 1902, We were pleased to call the Brothers of the Christian Schools, receives a new and eloquent justification in the *Catechist's Manual,* which, thanks to your diligent care and attention, has just been published, with a view to train catechists in the true sense of the term, or, in other words, to form true teachers of religion in the schools.

To be such, indeed, it does not suffice to possess ample and profound religious doctrine, whether dogmatic or moral; but as in the case of all the other sciences and with greater reason, so here it is indispensable that to knowledge of doctrine the master should join clearness and certainty of method, if he would set forth the subject in such a way as to make it penetrate the minds of the young and remain deeply engraved therein.

As We have Ourselves rapidly reviewed the volume which you have presented to Us, We are convinced that you have attained this noble purpose in a masterly way, by the an-

alytic and logical development of all that the master needs as a remote and a proximate preparation for this science of sciences. In Our opinion nothing has been neglected, whether in fundamental principles, general and special method, or detailed directions. It is certain that if they live up to these precious teachings, the Brothers of the Christian Schools will be true sons of St. John Baptist de la Salle, who consecrated himself to the great apostolate of catechism, after being thoroughly equipped for this in the School of St. Sulpice.

It is, therefore, with very great satisfaction that We heartily rejoice with you over this useful work, that We desire that it be in the hands of every priest who is called to teach catechism to children; and out of the fullness of Our heart We give to Our well-beloved Brothers of the Christian Schools the Apostolic Benediction as Our assured pledge of heavenly favors.

PIUS X, *Pope.*

From the Vatican, July 11, 1907.

PREFACE.

Although *The Catechist's Manual* has been in manuscript for some years past, it was deemed wiser to give further study to the needs and conditions of religious training in our country before sending the book forth to the public. Now that the Uniform Series of Catechisms for the *pupil* is completed, and covers all the grades from the kindergarten to the seminary, this work is to increase the efficiency of the *teacher*. It is presented in its briefer form, so that even those instructors in Sunday schools who have not had the benefit of special training in methods of teaching may go with confidence to its pages and begin at once to make practical use of its suggestions and directions.

It embodies not only cherished traditions of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, but also the fruits of ripe experience garnered in many lands and extending over many decades of years.

Its highest commendation is the expressed desire of our Holy Father, Pope Pius X, that it be found in the hands of all who are called to teach catechism to the young. Strong in the power of His Apostolic Benediction, may it

day by day lighten the burden and add to the harvest of those who are laboring in this chosen section of the Master's vineyard.

Feast of the Seven Dolors, 1912.

New York.

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2. Importance of Catechism. Salvation of Souls and of Society; Most Suitable Age; Fruits of Catechism; Conclusion.

1. End and Aim of Catechism.

Come, children, hearken to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.[1] In these words the Holy Ghost points out to us the real end of all education and, consequently, of catechism as well. To inspire children with the fear of the Lord, to teach them to respect His law, to train them to the practice of virtue—this is the purpose of the present work.

But what is meant by the fear of the Lord, of which Scripture speaks so often? that fear, which is the *beginning of wisdom*,[2] and which is also its *crown and fullness?*[3] Is it that servile fear that sees in God only a stern

[1] Ps. xxxiii, 11. [2] Ps. cx, 10; Eccles. 1, 14. [3] Eccles. 1, 18, 16.

judge, ready to inflict rigorous punishment on those who have disobeyed His orders? No; it is rather a filial fear, born of respect and love; a fear which, though disregarding neither God's power nor His justice, looks more willingly to His goodness and His mercy; which recoils from sin as an insult to God's love, and which strives to do good in order to please Him and do His will. Such should be the fear with which the teacher should inspire his pupils, and this fear of the Lord he should make the basis of all his work of education.

This fear is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and springs from our knowledge of God. It is in direct proportion to the ideas and the sentiments that we have of God, of His greatness and His infinite perfections. Hence, the end and aim of catechism is to make God known to children. To withdraw their minds from the things of earth which envelop them like a thick fog, to open their eyes to the first rays of the eternal truths, to unroll the panorama of the mysteries; most of all, to fix their attention upon the adorable person of the Word Incarnate, our Lord Jesus Christ: these are the means of awakening in their hearts sentiments of respect, love and obedience, the constituent elements of what Holy Writ calls the *fear of the Lord.*

The catechism should, therefore, be looked upon as a complete subject, as one that develops all the faculties of the child: senses and intellect, memory and understanding, heart and will. It is the whole man that the catechist must take hold of, elevate, transform and sanctify. "The end of catechism," says our Holy Father, Pius X, "is the amendment of life." Consequently, if it should seem

that during the lesson the catechist appeals in a particular manner to the intellect, it is in order thereby to reach the heart and the will. In other words, he places *instruction* and *education* in the forefront: instruction is the means; education the end.

Let us at once recognize the character of the instruction that leads to education as its principal end. It should be *full of unction* and deeply impregnated with tender piety. The catechist is not a mere professor; he is first and foremost an educator, a sanctifier of souls. Far from him, then, should be that dry and almost irreverent manner of treating the Christian dogmas which more closely resembles a mathematical demonstration than a lesson in religion. When the catechist speaks of God or of the mysteries of religion, he should do so with a soul filled to overflowing with faith and love. Then will he awaken like sentiments in the children who listen to him.

The child's soul is not like wax, responsive to a single impression; it is a force, an activity to be aroused and directed. The work of education would be sadly lacking in completeness, if it were made to depend almost solely on the personal action of the catechist; for to that must be added coöperation on the part of the pupil. It is incumbent on the catechist to secure this coöperation and to stimulate the exercise of the pupils' faculties: He must make the child *think*—make him reflect on the truths taught him. He must make the child *feel*—help him to experience emotions and sentiments like his own. Above all, he must make him *act*—translate into deeds the principles taught, and by voluntary repetition and deliberate effort develop these good acts into habits—*i. e.,*

into virtues. Then will the catechist have attained the end and aim of the catechism and have made his pupils staunch Christians and real disciples of Jesus Christ.

2. Importance of Catechism.

The defining of the end and aim of catechism demonstrates both its importance and its necessity. No other work in this world can compare with it. For what interests are at stake? Nothing less than the salvation of souls and even the salvation of society. "We affirm," said the learned Pontiff, Benedict XIV, "that most of damned suffer in eternal torment because they have been ignorant of those mysteries of faith which Christians should believe and know, in order to be counted among the elect." [1] Our Lord Himself taught us the same truth when, speaking to His Father, He said: This is eternal life (salvation), *that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.*[2]

By making God known to others, by training up Christians, and by saving souls, the catechist labors for the salvation of society. "I have always thought," said Leibnitz, "that the world would be saved if the education of youth were reformed." And Gerson asserts: "Make the rising generation Christian, and you will strike at the root of evil and assure the salvation of nations." On the other hand, if the children and youth of to-day be allowed to grow up ignorant and estranged from religion, we may expect not only disasters more lamentable than those which we now deplore, but even the definitive destruction of society.

[1] Institut. xxvii, n. 18. [2] John xvii, 3.

Infancy and the years of early youth are the most suitable periods for this Christian training. *It is good for a man,* says the Holy Ghost, *when he hath borne the yoke from his youth.*[1] And elsewhere: *A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it.*[2] Hence the Church has always shown great solicitude for the instruction and education of youth. In olden times she was greatly seconded in this work by the Christian family. Fathers and mothers were conscious of their obligation to train for heaven the children whom God had given them. To-day, alas! how many parents are oblivious of their sacred duty! Who will fill their place among the multitudes of children famished for lack of heavenly food, who have *fainted away in the streets of the city,* as the prophet says, because they have not wherewith to sustain the remnant of life that is left to them? Vainly do they cry to their *mothers* for bread or milk. These mothers, cruel as the ostrich of the desert, have no longer either milk or bread to share with them![3] Who, then, will fill the places of these parents if not you, Christian teachers and volunteer lay catechists? Preparatory to the ministrations of the priest, you gather these children together and give them the milk of sound doctrine, while awaiting the time when God Himself will feed them with His flesh and blood, to enable them to live His life and help them in the evil day.

Many and attractive are the fruits of religious teaching. By it faith is enlightened, hope quickened, and charity inflamed. By it children learn to detest and shun evil, and to love and practise virtue. By it their defects are

[1] Lam. iii, 27. [2] Prov. xxii, 6. [3] Lam. ii, 11, 12; iv, 3, 4.

corrected, their budding virtues cultivated. By it living tabernacles are prepared and adorned for the divine Guest who is soon to dwell in them. By it, in a word, the child becomes a faithful Christian, predestined for heaven.

The good produced in the souls of the young does not end there; the doctrine learned is a fruitful seed which propagates and perpetuates itself. Around him, whether in his home or among his companions, an instructed and virtuous child exercises a genuine apostolate; and, if he but perseveres, this apostolate will go on increasing in extent and influence.

Among the children who have learned their catechism, it is indeed too true that many turn from the way of salvation. Nevertheless, the catechist may console himself with the thought that even in their case the good done to them is not lost. The acts that they performed still remain; the merits which they acquired are preserved in the treasury of our heavenly Father, who will restore them if these poor sinners become worthy of them again. Perhaps, too, the germs of virtue now hidden in the depths of their hearts will again develop and bring forth fruits of supernatural life. The Holy Ghost furnishes occasions for conversion, and unless He is resisted obstinately by a perverse will, He will, in His own good time, give them new life.

Let the catechist, then, be convinced of the importance of his work. Let him be courageous in the midst of the efforts and the sacrifices which it demands of him. The salvation of souls is the prize. A soul saved means God praised, loved, and glorified through all eternity by one more of the elect! A soul lost means God hated, cursed,

and blasphemed during eternity by one more reprobate suffering the torments of hell! Who, then, meditating on these awful truths, would not be inflamed with zeal to snatch from destruction and give back to God so many children who are to-day threatened with the loss of the fruits of Redepmtion and of their own eternal happiness?

CHAPTER II.

THE CATECHIST.

SUMMARY.

1. The Catechist's Mission. Primarily to be Exercised by the Clergy. Helpers: Parents, Teachers, Lay Catechists. Extent of the Mission of Helpers.

2. Excellence of the Catechist's Function. The Good Done: Nobility of the Mission; Personal Benefit; Merit; Reward.

1. The Catechist's Mission.

It is to the Church and her ministers that the right of teaching religion belongs, for it is to the Apostles and their successors that Jesus Christ addressed these words: *Going, therefore, teach all nations,*[1] and to them alone that He promised His effective assistance to the end of time.[2] The official catechists of the Church, because they are the responsible messengers of doctrine, are the Pope and the Bishops, with their co-workers, the pastors and priests—all ministers of the divine word.

But the work is so vast, and the number of workers relatively so small, that if they would not fail in their task they must seek outside help and appeal to all men of good will. Besides, is not coöperation by the people in the work of teaching catechism part of the divine plan? It is written: *He gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbor,*[3] and, therefore, he must render account of his neighbor's salvation. In the old law, was not the head of the family the official catechist? The

[1] Matt. xxviii, 19. [2] Ibid., 20. [3] Eccles. xvii, 12.

Lord *set up a testimony in Jacob; and made a law in Israel, how great things He commanded our fathers, that they should make the same known to their children: that another generation might know them: the children that should be born, and should rise up and declare them to their children.*[1] This precept was observed. How often does not Scripture express sentiments like these: *We have heard, O God, with our ears. Our fathers have declared to us . . !*[2] Should Christians be inferior in this respect to the Israelites of old?

The helpers of the clergy may be divided into two classes:

1. Those whose mission is in some way inherent in their social function, as fathers and mothers with reference to their children, and teachers with respect to their pupils;

2. Those who voluntarily devote themselves to this work of charity, *Lay Catechists.*

Who can deny that it is a duty for parents to instruct their children in the elements of Christian doctrine? It is so strict an obligation that they can never be fully relieved of it. They are especially bound to teach them the formulas of prayer, and to accustom them early to recite them piously every day.

Teachers also neither can nor should be destitute of interest in the Christian instruction and education of their pupils. In the matter of teaching religion, their functions must vary with their aptitude and with the measure of confidence which the Church accords them. In regard to public-school teachers, this confidence often depends on the educational relations that exist between

[1] Ps. lxxvii, 5, 6. [2] Ps. xliii, 1.

Church and State and on the more or less genuine control over such schools which is allowed to the Church. The Church cannot authorize an instructor to teach Christian doctrine unless she has the means of ascertaining his orthodoxy and superintending his lessons.[a]

On the other hand, how can we conceive of a complete and harmonious education of all the faculties without including serious training in religion? Without religion, children may, indeed, be *instructed,* but they can never be *educated,* in the true and complete signification of that term.

The organization of Volunteer or Lay Catechists arose from the misfortunes of our times. Wherever the family, steeped in indifference or absorbed in material cares, began to neglect the most sacred part of its work; where civil society, rejecting all Christian ideals, began to confiscate schools and banish religious teaching, it became an imperative duty to supply this need in another way. Then arose that Christian army of both sexes, of various ages and conditions, who, in a spirit of charity and under the direction of the pastors, took up the task abandoned by parents and teachers. Let us bless God, who can always draw good from evil, that in these our days He has raised up this legion of lay apostles, whose zeal and devotedness are a source of strength and a pledge of victory to the Church, while they assure the laborers themselves an abundant harvest of merits.

[a] In principle, the Church has the right of supervision over all schools, even if not erected by her, in which Catholic children are taught; for it is her right and her duty to see to it that the instruction contains nothing injurious to faith or morals. It is, therefore, an odious abuse of power on the part of certain governments to put obstacles to the exercise of this authority.

Not only is the coöperation of the faithful in the teaching of religion lawful; it is also earnestly solicited by the pastors, as may be seen from the following words of the illustrious Pontiff, Leo XIII:[1]

"The office, indeed, of preaching—that is, of teaching, lies by divine right in the province of the pastors—namely, of the bishops whom the *Holy Ghost has placed to rule the Church of God.*[2] It belongs, above all, to the Roman Pontiff, the vicar of Jesus Christ, established as head of the Universal Church, teacher of all that pertains to morals and faith. No one, however, must entertain the notion that private individuals are prevented from taking some active part in the duty of teaching, especially those on whom God has bestowed gifts of mind with the strong wish of rendering themselves useful. These, so often as circumstances demand, may take upon themselves, not, indeed, the office of the pastor, but the task of communicating to others what they have themselves received, becoming, as it were, living echoes of their masters in the faith. Coöperation on the part of the laity has seemed to the Fathers of the Vatican Council so opportune and fruitful of good that they thought well to invite it. 'All faithful Christians, but those chiefly who are in a prominent position, or engaged in teaching, we entreat, by the compassion of Jesus Christ, and enjoin by the authority of the same God and Saviour, that they bring aid to ward off and eliminate these errors from Holy Church and contribute their zealous help in spreading abroad the light of undefiled faith.'"[3]

[1] Encyclical Sapientiæ, January 10, 1890. [2] Rom. x, 14-17. [3] Const. *Dei Filius.*

There has been much and, to all appearances, unprofitable discussion concerning the limits to be assigned to catechists who are helpers. Perhaps, indeed, the restrictions have been made too great The question under discussion was this: Should auxiliary catechists be restricted to the literal teaching of the prayers and of the text of the catechism, or may they also give explanations? According to the papal document just cited, they should not take upon themselves the office of the pastor, but they may "communicate to others what they have themselves received, becoming, as it were, living echoes of their masters in the faith" So defined, their function cannot in principle be limited to the mere task of having the text of the prayers and of the catechism committed to memory by their pupils.

Neither is this the idea that Christian parents entertain of their own mission to their children. Long before their children are able to memorize the abstract formulas and the technical terms of the catechism, they teach them the essentials of religion in language suited to their tender years. These explanations precede the text, and here also the instinct of the father and the mother is revealed as the inspired source of sound pedagogy.

Without going at greater length into a discussion which, happily, seems closed to-day, it is to be noted that lay catechists, as docile helpers of the clergy, will always be directed by them. However modest may be the share accredited to them in this sacred function, they will be satisfied with it, and contribute most generously and most devotedly to the great work of Christian renovation, whose sublime plan, taking the words of St. Paul, our Holy

Father, Pius X, has traced in these words: To Restore All Things in Christ Jesus.

2. Excellence of the Catechist's Function.

To seek out children whose souls appear to be neglected or abandoned, to group them together, to bring them to the priest; to teach them from their earliest years not only to pronounce the sweet names of Jesus and Mary and to raise their minds to God, but also to make the sign of the cross, to recite with the heart as well as the lips, the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary,* the *Apostles' Creed,* and the summary of the law of God; to instruct them in the most sublime and the most necessary truths; to lead them to the path of virtue and to support their faltering steps therein, to prepare in young hearts a fit dwelling place for their eucharistic God; and after their first communion to help them to persevere by completing their instruction and giving them good advice: what mission can be holier or more fruitful than this? What hopes does it not justify for the welfare of religion and of society? As St. John Chrysostom says, "What greater than to govern the souls and form the morals of youth? For there is certainly no painter, no statuary, no artist of any kind who attains the height gained by him who is master of the art of forming the souls of youth."[1]

To teach catechism is to be associated with the apostles, the doctors, and the saintly bishops of all times; it is to coöperate in the salvation of souls and fit them to receive the graces which the Saviour's blood has merited for them;

[1] Hom. Office of St. John Baptist de la Salle.

it is to walk in the footsteps of our divine Master, whose special delight it was to gather children around Him and give them instruction.

But the good produced by the catechist is not limited to the souls of the children whom he instructs, and the families which, through their means, he may influence; to a very great extent it is registered also in himself. Being obliged to apply himself to meditation on the Christian truths, he gathers as the first fruit of his labor an increase of grace and a rapid progress in virtue. He draws down on himself the choicest blessing of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the devoted friend of children; for He who will not allow a glass of cold water to go without reward when given in His name, will richly recompense souls who have devoted themselves to the work of imparting the knowledge of His doctrine.

Moreover, the merits acquired by the catechist from his excellent work are incalculable. "Three things," says Father Crasset, "render an alms of great merit: the value of the thing given, the quality and need of the giver, and his intention or purity of motive." Now, what does the catechist give? A treasure of inestimable value, infinitely surpassing gold and silver, as Scripture attests—viz.: the knowledge of God and of all that concerns His service, the science of the saints, the wisdom of paradise.

To whom does he give it? To the children of God, to princes fallen from their noble origin to a state of extreme indigence; yet their heavenly Father has resolved to lift them up again, to call them back to Him, to restore them to His kingdom. *It is not the will of your*

Father, who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.[1]

What is the catechist's intention? It is the purest and noblest that man can conceive. He seeks to establish the reign of God in the hearts of children, to extend the limits of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, to secure for Him full possession of souls whom He has redeemed with His precious blood.

To these merits may be added many indulgences granted to the faithful who teach catechism and to the associates of the different Archconfraternities of Christian Doctrine.[a]

Lastly, in heaven a special glory is promised to those who, not content with keeping the law of the Lord themselves, have earnestly labored to teach it to others. *Whosoever shall do and teach,* says our Lord, *he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*[2] Within the limits of their labor and their success, they will enjoy the aureola of doctors, for, said the angel to the prophet Daniel: *They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.*[3]

What joy they shall experience on finding in heaven so many souls who, but for them, would, perhaps, have been forever excluded! And what shall be the transports of gratitude offered by these souls! "Thus," says St. John Baptist de la Salle, "shall the elect recall the good done them. Some will present their robe of innocence to Jesus Christ, and assure Him that you enabled them to preserve its whiteness. Others, after having sinned

[a] See Appendix at end of book.
[1] Matt. xviii, 14. [2] Matt. v, 19. [3] Dan. xii, 3.

and then repented in the blood of the Lamb, will offer Him the sufferings that you will have endured to bring them back to the path of salvation. All will unite in begging a favorable sentence from Jesus Christ in your behalf. They will beseech Him not to defer placing you in possession of that supreme happiness which they themselves enjoy, solely because of your zeal and devotedness. What glory shall be theirs who will have educated youth! What honor when their zeal and application shall be published to the whole world! How heaven shall re-echo with grateful acclamations from the faithful children to whom shall have shown the path to their eternal home!" [1]

[1] *Meditations on School,* xvi, p. 95.

CHAPTER III.

QUALITIES OF THE CATECHIST.

SUMMARY.

1. Professional Qualities. Knowledge, Pedagogical Skill.
2. Moral Qualities. Love for the Pupils, Prudence, Piety.
3. Exterior of the Catechist. Bearing, Words, Deeds, Good Example.

1. Professional Qualities of the Catechist.

THE CATECHIST'S KNOWLEDGE.—The catechist's knowledge should be solid and extensive. If he does not need the erudition of the theologian, he ought at least to possess clear, certain, and precise ideas on the essentials of dogma and morals, to enable him to explain the elements of Christian doctrine with order, justice, and precision. He must also be able to point out what is erroneous in the answers given by the pupils in class, reply to the questions incidentally addressed to him, dissipate the doubts of the children, and remove the obscurity and misunderstandings that may have been produced in their minds by their early environment. To give his lessons with the conviction which is becoming to a teacher of Christian doctrine, and without which he would seriously compromise his influence over the young, he must possess a superabundant store of knowledge. A meager or superficial acquaintance with the subject will by no means suffice.

But this knowledge should not extend merely to dogmatic and moral truths; it should also embrace the principles of spiritual direction, for the perfect catechist should not be content with displaying speculative truths to his pupils: he should also train them to the practices of a Christian life, and tenderly guide their first steps in the paths of knowledge and virtue.

Hence he shall consider it an essential duty to strive every day to add to his knowledge of religion by studying advanced catechisms and reading good books, especially the *New Testament, Bible History* and *Church History,* and the *Following of Christ.*

As far as possible, he will assist at the parish instructions, and if he is in one of the larger cities where special courses have been organized for lay catechists, he will eagerly seize so favorable an occasion of perfecting himself in his work.

He will not be content with reading or studying Christian doctrine, but will make it the subject of his meditations, and strive to be the first to put in practice the maxims of conduct which he desires to inculcate in his pupils. Moreover, this personal experience will prove to him an abundant source of light and will draw down on his labors the blessing of God.

Pedagogic Skill.—To know a subject is one thing; to know how to teach it is a very different thing. Yet both qualities are requisite for the catechist. Knowledge is useful to him who possesses it; it becomes profitable to others only when its possessor has also the talent to impart it. A catechist with ordinary knowledge who knows how to teach will produce much greater results than one

who is learned, but lacks skill in teaching. For the former will teach his pupils much more and in shorter time than the latter. His teaching, being more attractive both to himself and to the children, will facilitate the work of both.

A lucid intelligence, to grasp the sense and the bearing of the formulas of the catechism; a logical mind, to classify the ideas, to construct and to analyze definitions and to make all deductions correctly; great facility in adaptation, to suit the different dispositions of the pupils and, if necessary, to pass rapidly from one method to another: these are qualities desirable in every professor, and especially in a teacher of Christian doctrine. To these should be added an acquaintance with methodic procedure, and, in particular, an attentive study of child psychology, which is its chief foundation. Moreover, the catechist must try to acquire great skill in putting questions, in noting promptly what is good and what is incorrect in an answer, in order to make, or to get his pupils to make, the necessary corrections. The art of questioning is pre-eminently the professional talent that marks the true catechist.

2. Moral Qualities of the Catechist.

Love of Children.—Love is the key to the heart. It is the indispensable condition of doing good. If a teacher be animated with a genuine love for children, he will show this in his whole exterior when he is in class: his face will brighten, his speech will be gentle and kindly, his gesture winning. Children make no mistake in this, and they are quickly won over to such a teacher. A cur-

rent of mental sympathy is set up between them and their teacher; their souls open to receive his teaching with docility; he has power to mold them as he wills.

But his love should be *supernatural*. It is God that the teacher should love in his pupils, as it is God who loves them in and through the teacher, since this love is none other than the *charity of God* which is *poured out into our hearts by the Holy Ghost.*[1]

If the teacher's love for the children be supernatural, it will also be *impartial* and *universal*. All his pupils have equal right to his affection; all are children of God by the same title deeds, and their souls are equally precious in the eyes of our Lord. The teacher is debtor to all, says St. Paul, but especially to the weaker, the less gifted, the more abandoned. It is, therefore, to the latter that he must give most care, in order to gain their good-will; yet without prejudice to the others. They have more need of light, of consolation, and of encouragement. By reason of their evil inclinations, and perhaps also of vicious habits which they have already contracted, they are more exposed to evil and are in greater proximate danger of everlasting damnation. He must, therefore, strive to procure their salvation with persevering love and indefatigable zeal. *They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: for I came not to call the just, but sinners.*[2]

Charity is *patient;* it can wait for results; it is rebuffed by no difficulty. It is *meek*, and knows the art of getting possession of hearts and handling them gently. It is *joyful*. If the teacher loves his pupils, if he loves

[1] Rom. v, 5. [2] Mark ii, 17.

God and the doctrine which he teaches, he will find a holy gladness taking possession of his heart and shedding light upon everything. "We are listened to with much greater pleasure," says St. Augustine, "when we ourselves take delight in what we say."

But meekness and kindness are by no means to be confounded with a soft compliance which flatters the defects of children in place of correcting them. True charity may well be joined to reserve, dignity, and firmness. Being habitually kind, affable, and serene, it can, when the need arises, speak with authority, reprove forcibly, and excite vigorously. For the sole motive, the single rule of its actions, is the welfare of souls.

PRUDENCE.—The only prudence under consideration here is that which is necessary from the point of view of doctrine. When joined to zeal, this prudence moves the catechist to take all the means at his disposal for increasing his knowledge of religion. It prompts him to give serious preparation to all his lessons, not only as to matter, but also as to form and method, in order to prevent all inaccuracies and to keep his proofs and explanations within proper limits.

If any doubt arises in his mind, or he meets an unexpected difficulty, he will have recourse to the wisdom of those whom God has placed over him to instruct and direct him. Lastly, in delicate matters, he will leave the necessary explanations to the priest and take care himself to maintain great reserve.

PIETY.—*Piety is profitable to all things,* says St. Paul; *having promise of the life that now is and of that which*

is to come.[1] It is also true that piety is useful to all persons, and is particularly necessary for the catechist. By it he is enabled to understand and to relish the truths of salvation. For it is one kind of science that may be learned in books and acquired by study, and a very different and supereminent science of which St. Paul speaks, which must be learned from God Himself by means of pious exercises, especially mental prayer. It is an experimental science of God and divine things, which the catechist should seek in preference to all else, because it is this that he must strive to impart to his pupils if he would really enlighten and sanctify them.

In piety the catechist possesses the key to the treasures of heaven; by it he procures for himself and his ministry the most abundant blessings of God. What good can he effect without divine grace? A sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, he will speak to his pupils words that may perhaps please the ear, but they will prove ineffective. With them alone he cannot attain to the purpose of his efforts.

The pious catechist will find the way that leads to souls. The souls of children are much more eager for piety, unction, and love, than for science. Hence, between the heart of a pious teacher and the innocent hearts of children there exists a mysterious affinity which enables teacher and pupils to read and to understand each other. For these tender lambs the pious catechist is really a good shepherd. His voice fills them with happiness. They follow him and obey him.

Being a special apostle of the holy eucharist, since he

[1] 1 Tim. iv, 8.

is often privileged to prepare living tabernacles for the coming of our sacramental Lord, the catechist should be distinguished from the rest of the faithful by ardent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. This he should make the center of his spiritual life, the fire at which he may rekindle his zeal, the fountain whence he may daily draw new graces for himself and his pupils.

In his frequent communings with the Sacred Victim who immolates Himself upon the altar for his salvation and that of his pupils, he will learn to join sacrifice to prayer. It is sacrifice that gives wings to prayer, enabling it to fly to the heart of God and win an answer. Let the teacher, then, pray with fervor, but let him also be willing to suffer. Let him offer to God for the dear souls in his care his acts of virtue, his penances, his griefs and sufferings, recalling those words of our Lord: *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth*—that is, when I shall be nailed to the cross and dying in agony upon it, *will draw all things to myself*.[1]

3. The Catechist's Exterior.

Bearing of the Catechist.—It is in the name of God that the catechist presents himself before his pupils. His ministry is a kind of participation in the holy priesthood, and his words are the words of the King of heaven, whose messenger he is. *We are, therefore, ambassadors for Christ,* says St. Paul; *God, as it were, exhorting by us.*[2] Let the teacher, then, be conscious of his dignity, and from the very beginning of the catechism lesson, let him in bearing and conduct, in look, gesture and tone of voice,

[1] John xii, 32. [2] 2 Cor. v, 20.

give the children the conviction that a religious exercise of great importance is in progress.

During the lesson, if he gives it indoors, he should remain seated at his desk with modesty and dignity. Outside of the classroom, the catechist may teach either standing or sitting, but he should take care not to move about and not to lose sight of his puplis. By his countenance, stamped with mild seriousness, by his frank and pleasant manner, he will inspire both respect and confidence. He will carefully avoid all levity, all unbecoming postures, all brusque or violent movements, all bodily contortions, all unnecessary noise, etc.

He will no less carefully watch over the movements of his heart to check any feeling of impatience or anger. All these defects would be objectionable in giving a lesson in even a secular study; but here they go directly against the end which the catechist has in view, and hence they would destroy to a great extent the good which the lesson would otherwise produce in souls.

The Catechist's Words.—Like his bearing, the words of the catechist should mirror the dispositions by which he is animated. Lively faith, profound respect for God, for the word of God and for holy things—in a word, a sincere religious spirit—all this he should constantly manifest by his tone of voice and his choice of expressions, and all this he should develop in the souls of his pupils. Let no ill-timed pleasantry fall from his lips, no trivial expression, no allusion to things on which it is better not to fix one's thoughts. Let his language be always serious without degenerating into rudeness; let it be mild and affable without ceasing to be dignified.

Above all, let him speak with conviction. Never should the least doubt of the sincerity of his sentiments be raised in the minds of his hearers. *We also believe,* says St. Paul, *and therefore we speak.*[1]

Acting in this way, he will honor his ministry and bring forth abundant fruit of salvation.

To captivate the attention of his hearers, he must interest them. To attain this result, three things are necessary:

1. The subject treated must be suited to their age.

2. It must be presented in an attractive way.

3. The language used must be adapted to their actual power of comprehension.

The catechist should make constant efforts to acquire a style at once correct and pleasing. He should take care to pronounce the words distinctly, shunning excessive speed or slowness, and emphasizing the terms that express the principal ideas. "To recount marvels, but not to recount them well," says St. Francis de Sales, "is to say nothing. Say little and say it well; then you say much."

Here a few detailed counsels and rules may be useful.

1. The style of a teacher, and especially of a catechist, should be incisive, rapid, *clear-cut.* Use short sentences, containing only one proposition, or, at most, two. Long or complex sentences are a kind of labyrinth in which children get lost. Hence, use few or no conjunctions or conjunctive phrases.

2. It should be *simple.* Ideas are wanted, not words. Avoid technical or scientific terms, except such as are

[1] 2 Cor. iv, 13.

found in Holy Scripture or in the text of the catechism. Then be careful to explain them well.

3. It should be *varied.* This variety should be found rather in the turn of phrases than in the changing of words. Make the principal ideas prominent, and do not be afraid to repeat the same nouns. Use few pronouns; avoid especially *this* and *that, these* and *those,* the *former* and the *latter,* which make demands on the memory and oblige the mind to go back in a way contrary to the genius of the child-mind.

If a formula is important, it should be repeated in identical terms. Very often, also, a like rule is necessary for the historical narratives told to children.

4. Avoid abstract terms; choose rather adjectives and verbs. Thus, instead of saying: "It is of *obligation* to go to communion at Easter," say: "You are *obliged* to" . . . In place of saying: "The *wisdom* of God is infinite," say: "God is *infinitely wise,*" etc.

When the lesson involves interior phenomena, speak rather of the outward sign or manifestation. For instance, instead of speaking of the *shame* or *contrition* of a child, you might say that he *blushed,* he was *sorry,* he *wept.*

The Action of the Catechist.—This term is used to express the moral influence of the catechist on his pupils. This he exercises, first of all, by his words and his behavior at catechism; but he exercises it more continuously and to a much greater extent by the example of a holy life. In this respect he is a catechist not merely during the lesson period, but everywhere and always. Everywhere and always should he confirm his words by

his example, and be a living proof and illustration of the doctrine which he teaches.

The child is a born imitator; he learns much more by his eyes than by his ears. In vain will the teacher address the language of truth to the child's ears, if his own conduct does not present a brilliant illustration of it to the eye. "No one has the right to teach if his conduct belies his words," wrote the Bishop of Beauvais. "The scholar fashions himself after his master, to whom he clings as the ivy to the oak. If the tree lifts its top to the clouds, the ivy will climb to the clouds; if the tree lies upon the ground, the ivy will lie there with it."

The teacher must, therefore, watch carefully over himself, his words, and his conduct, in order to be a living mirror of all the virtues for his pupils. The noble function to which he devotes himself should be a most valued stimulus to advance in the way of holiness, according to the advice of St. Paul to his disciples, Titus and Timothy: *Be thou an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity.*[1] *Show thyself an example of good works, in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity.*[2]

[1] 1 Tim. iv, 12. [2] Tit. ii, 7.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PUPILS.

SUMMARY.

1. The Pupils. Dignity of Souls. The Catechist's Helpers.

2. Divisions and Grades. When Education Should Begin; Different Categories; Concentric Programs.

3. Dispositions of Pupils. Desire for Instruction, Attention, Docility, Generosity.

1. The Pupils.

The catechism class is ordinarily composed of children. They bring, indeed, the graces and good qualities of their age, but they bring likewise its defects, too often aggravated by bad training. The catechist, however, will not be stopped by these externals. His profound faith will reveal to him in his pupils souls that are dear to God, created by Him to His own image, and called to reign with Him hereafter in heaven. To save them from the everlasting ruin with which they were threatened, God did not hesitate to offer up His only Son, who went freely to death and shed for them the last drop of His blood. After reconciling them with His Father and restoring to them their right to the inheritance of heaven, our Saviour poured forth His divine Spirit into their hearts; and this Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption and sanctification, enlightens them, purifies them, directs them and protects them during their pilgrimage here below, in order to lead them into the possession of that everlasting glory

of which, by His grace, He has already given them here below both the seed and the pledge.

The catechist is His visible representative, His co-worker. Being endowed with senses as well as spiritual faculties, the child needs this external influence. But the Holy Ghost, who has called the teacher to so sublime an employment, does not abandon him to his own resources. He dwells personally in each child to give efficacy to the teacher's word. Moreover, the work done is really His work. It, therefore, behooves the teacher to go to his class with entire confidence. God sends him and inspires him, as God also in the person of each child listens to his word and coöperates with him.

And he has other helpers. To each child born into this world God gives a prince of His heavenly court as a protector. So touching a proof of His divine solicitude is well calculated to impress the teacher both with the dignity of the child and the importance of his own work.

To these children in the person of the beloved disciple, Jesus Christ has also given His own Mother. She cherishes them tenderly, blesses them, and protects them from on high, whither she calls them and where she welcomes them if they walk in her footsteps through life.

The saints in heaven think of them, are deeply interested in their salvation, and constantly intercede for them.

"Reflect then, O educators," says St. Jerome; "see what duties are imposed on you by the precious jewel entrusted to your care, and with what solicitude you should train up a soul destined to become the temple of God."

2. Divisions and Grades.

At what age should the religious education of chil-

dren begin? As soon as they are capable of it—that is, when the first gleams of intelligence appear in them. Even before the child can articulate a word, his pious mother teaches him to call upon God and His Blessed Mother by kissing the crucifix or a picture of the Blessed Virgin. Night and morning she makes the sign of the cross upon him; later she teaches him to make it himself as she guides his unskilled hand. After this she aids him to join the words to the action, words so admirable in their brevity and yet revealing the most profound of all mysteries, and serving as a short offering of one's self and all one's acts to the Blessed Trinity.

Then follow the shortest and most beautiful prayers of the Christian: the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary,* with a short act of love for God and a little prayer to the Guardian Angel. At the age of three years children are sometimes sent to a day nursery or a kindergarten. Here the training begun at the mother's knee should be sedulously maintained and continued.

In this way, then, the religious education of little children should begin. But, alas! how many mothers to-day are forgetful or are so burdened with other preoccupations that they neglect this sacred duty! What shall we say of the multitudes of children who frequent schools from which God and his religion are officially banished? What a magnificent apostolate it is for lay catechists to gather together these poor children who are spiritual orphans, to assemble them on holidays or on ordinary days after class, and to supply what is lacking to them from either family or school, teaching them their prayers, telling attractive and pertinent stories, which alternate with their

innocent recreations! However humble it may appear, this ministry is of very great importance. Later on in the life of the child it would be extremely difficult to fill the void left by an early education without religion.

Children of school age may be grouped in three divisions: [a]

1. From six to eight years. They attend the instructions for little children, preparatory to confession and first communion. This period is of very great importance, since it is to be devoted to initiating the young pupil in the holiest and most fruitful practices of the Christian life. Because of his tender age, his instruction is rudimentary; training to ways of virtue here plays the principal part.

2. From eight to ten or eleven years. This is an intermediate period in which the child's intelligence begins to unfold. Here a methodic course of religious instruction may be started, taking the text of the little catechism as a basis. This text the children should learn by heart.

3. From eleven to thirteen or fourteen years of age. During this period, on account of their developing minds, the children may receive more extended explanations and learn the complete text of the catechism. At the same time the teacher makes every effort to strengthen the good moral dispositions of the pupils and to prepare them for the warfare which they will have to wage later in life.

Following the courses proper to the lower grades of

[a] This may be correlated with the Course of Study and Syllabus in Religion for the Elementary Schools of the Archdiocese of New York.

school,[a] there are perseverance classes in certain parishes, and in Catholic colleges the instruction in religion is adapted to the needs of young men and young women. As this book is addressed also to lay catechists, it will not be out of place to add to the classes already named, those for backward children, for converts, for unbelievers, for adults, for women, for soldiers, for prisoners, etc., as well as for the sick and the dying, in whom, moreover, the instruction, though rapid, is often marvelously efficacious.

But for *normal* categories of pupils, the programs of instruction, although progressively extended from course to course, or from year to year, *should from the very beginning* embrace the whole field of religion; in other words, they should be *concentric circles.* Beginning with the most necessary truths, the teacher may each year prolong his radius, but he must always return to the matter already studied.

The justice of this method is readily perceived. When children come to the age of reason they are obliged to know and believe explicitly a certain number of truths. They have, likewise, duties to fulfill and sacraments to receive or to prepare for. They need, therefore, instruction on all these points, and, although it may be rudimentary, it should cover the whole field of Christian doctrine.

On the other hand, the grave inconveniences resulting from the opposite mode of procedure may be easily seen, especially in our day, when changes of residence are so frequent. If the entire course of religion were finished

[a] See the Christian Brothers' Complete Uniform Series of Catechisms from the Kindergarten to the Seminary, John J. McVey, Philadelphia.

only at the end of several years, many children would be exposed to the danger of never hearing the explanation of certain important points of the catechism; their instruction would be like a truncated cone, and their religious training would be very incomplete.

In religion the whole is much more important than the details. If the details are necessary to give clearness to the thought, it is especially by views and impressions of the whole that the soul is elevated and sanctified.

3. Dispositions Required of the Pupils.

In order to have religious teaching produce all its fruits, the labor of the catechist will not suffice. Grace itself would be inefficacious if the child did not fully coöperate therewith. Hence, the pupil, by prayer and good-will, must prepare his soul for the reception of the divine seed and, after receiving it, labor courageously to make it grow and bear fruit. For this he needs four dispositions: the *desire for instruction, attention, docility,* and *generosity.*

The Desire for Instruction.—The desire for knowledge is one of the most noble incentives to study. A pupil who likes study is capable of every effort. Every new truth that he learns is for him a kind of reward. But when this truth is religious, it has exceptional value for the present and for the future. It is important, then, to inflame the hearts of the children with this keen desire for religious instruction. The best means to this end is to inspire them with great esteem for it, to make them appreciate the grandeur and the importance of this science, its practical value and its efficacy to produce holiness of

life. Since it has already made saints, it may produce a like effect in them. This, indeed, is a grace which they should ask in fervent prayer, especially at the beginning and at the end of each lesson.

The personal efforts of the teacher may also help greatly to give the pupils a taste for catechism. He should make his instruction interesting, and provide in it attraction for both mind and heart. Let him vary it; for, says Fénelon, "the child is captured by variety and pleasure." "In the first lessons of religion," he adds, "everything should be pleasing . . . A child will hate study and virtue if he conceives an aversion for what he hears about them."

Attention.—The word of God calls for respectful attention, which is also an indispensable condition of deriving profit from it. As far as the children are concerned, this attention should be *voluntary* and *affectionate*. But they are not capable of sustained effort. It is vain to repeat again and again: "Listen to me! Pay attention!" The teacher must take their attention prisoner, captivate it by the interest contained both in the subject itself and in his way of presenting it.

Docility.—Religious education is pre-eminently a work of authority. The children should receive the truths taught by the catechist as coming from God Himself. The dogmas of faith and the laws of morality are imposed on him with equal authority as on his pupils. He should, therefore, accept them with entire submission of mind and heart. The requisite docility is very easy for children, but becomes more difficult as they grow older if they allow evil passions, like pride and sensuality, to

have sway over them. Then they must have recourse to prayer and the sacraments to restore peace and calm to their troubled souls.

GENEROSITY.—Not he who knows the truth, nor ever he who has a relish for it, will be saved, but only he who puts it in practice. We must *perform the truth,*[1] according to the strenuous expression of Scripture. When we listen to it, then, let it always be with the firm resolve to apply it to ourselves, whatever effort or sacrifice it may cost.

It is plain, then, that the teacher must strive to excite and to develop in his pupils this rectitude of will, this courageous energy. Let him often point out to them the excellence of the law of God; let him excite their wills by the motives most efficacious in determining them to act.

It is said of the Mother of our Saviour that she pondered in heart all the words and deeds of her divine Son.[2] The children should be led to follow her example. If they cherish for religious instruction the esteem which it merits, they will cultivate this sentiment outside the time proper to religious exercises. This divine seed will take root and grow up in their hearts, where it will blossom in holy thoughts, pious desires, and fervent resolutions.

[1] Eph. iv, 15. [2] Luke ii, 19.

CHAPTER V.

ORGANIZATION.

SUMMARY.

1. Place and Equipment. *Place:* School, Church, Special Hall. *Equipment:* Benches and Tables, or Chairs and Desks; Crucifix, Statues and Pictures; Blackboard.
2. Time for Catechism. Duration; Choice of Days; Distribution of Exercises.
3. Discipline. Its Necessity. Exactitude. Placing. Behavior of Pupils. Silence and Recollection. Regulation. Honors. Emulation. Repression.

1. Place and Equipment.

PLACE.—In Catholic schools the catechism lessons are ordinarily given in the room in which the pupils have been at work all day. As this room is dominated by a crucifix with statues or pictures of saints on either side, as it re-echoes the prayers recited from time to time during the day, as the thought of God's presence in it is often recalled to the minds of the pupils, it can, by no means, be considered a profane place. To emphasize its religious character and to increase the effectiveness of the lesson, all occasions of distraction should be removed as far as possible. Both teacher and pupils should clear their desks of everything not actually needed during catechism; drawings, problems, etc., on the blackboard should be erased or covered. During these preparations, the doors or windows of the room might be opened to freshen the atmosphere.

The parish classes in catechism are ordinarily held in the church proper or in a room or building adjoining it. Men of experience agree that it is preferable not to use the church for this purpose; but sometimes the use of one of the chapels or of a special section of the church is unavoidable. Whatever be the place selected, it ought to be made comfortable, especially in cold or damp seasons, and to be decorated with appropriate religious emblems. The accessories of an ordinary school, including a playground, are valuable assets.

The advantages of a special room for catechism are beyond dispute. In the words of Canon Cappliez: "The catechist is freer. He is disturbed neither by the parish services nor by people who come to the church to pray. He is much less fatigued; and, as he has to husband his strength, this a point of importance. . . The children are less distracted, and they hear better. This also is an item to be considered."

When the catechist has only a small number to instruct, he might take them to his own home. Teacher and pupils then become more intimate, and, if the children become more attached to him, the catechist's influence is greatly increased. Children that receive individual attention are more likely to be better prepared and to persevere longer. St. Francis de Sales remarked that small classes bear more fruit than large ones.

EQUIPMENT.—There must be chairs or benches with curved or open backs in the place in which the catechism lessons are given. Their height should be such as to

make the children comfortable when seated, and their general structure such as to "prevent any physical malformation which might result from being continually in a tiring posture." [1]

If, from time to time, the children should be called upon to write during the lesson, their chairs should be fitted with arm-rests, if there are no desks or tables in the room. If there be windows on only one side, the light should reach the pupils from the left.[2]

Any measure looking to the comfort of the pupils may be of exceptional importance when the instruction is given to children, or even to adults, who work in factories. After long hours of painful labor, their catechism lesson should be a refreshment for body as well as soul, not an additional fatigue.

It is needless to insist on having a fine crucifix in the room, placed at a suitable height in front of the children, in order to attract their attention.

Statues or pictures of the Most Blessed Virgin, of St. Joseph, and of the Guardian Angel may well be placed in the room also.

The catechist should also have large pictures illustrating Bible history or the catechism, to be used, as the occasion arises, to make his teaching more objective, as will be explained later.

If the resources allow, a stereopticon or other device for the projection of views might be purchased, of ample

[1] See Christian Brothers' *Elements of Practical Pedagogy*, p. 33.

[2] Even St. Augustine considered such details important. See his *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed*, in vol. iii of Christian Literature Society, Buffalo, 1887.

power for the size of the room, with a collection of views for the teaching of Bible history or catechism.[1]

Lastly, even in a chapel, a blackboard is necessary; it is an indispensable aid in all teaching.

2. Time for Catechism.

Duration.—The regulation for the Brothers of the Christian Schools, sanctioned by pontifical authority, fixes the time for catechism as follows: On ordinary days, a half hour; on the eve of holidays, an hour; on Sundays and holy days of obligation, one hour and a half. This schedule does not include the study of catechism, nor does it include such recitations as the prayers, the catechism, the gospel, and sacred history, on the one hand; nor, on the other, the oral teaching of sacred history, or the reflections or exhortations usually added to morning and evening prayer.

For the parish catechism classes and for the lessons presided over by lay catechists, in which the different exercises enumerated should have their place, a half hour would not be sufficient. Yet it is difficult to determine what length of time would suit all the pupils. The teachers must adapt themselves to the various circumstances of place and person. In general, the lesson should last about an hour.

Choice of Days.—Sunday seems to be the day designated by God Himself for the religious training of children and such adults as need instruction. Under the old law, the Israelites gathered in their synagogues on the Sabbath day, to listen to readings from the Sacred

[1] See Catalogue of Maison de la Bonne Presse, rue Bayard, 5, Paris; also the Pictorial Catechism (Stereopticon views), by Joseph F. Wagner, 9 Barclay Street, New York.

Books. Schools for catechism were formerly called Sunday schools, a name which they still bear in several countries. To teach or to assist at catechism is counted among the work most proper to sanctify the Lord's day.[a]

For public school children, in the sense in which that term is generally understood in this country, holidays and vacations are also a favorable time, by which zealous catechists will try to profit. They will endeavor to make their instructions so interesting that the children will willingly renounce all other attractions in order to assist at them.

Distribution of Exercises.—In the schools conducted by the Brothers of the Christian Schools this is the ordinary plan of a lesson:

Before the Catechism.—1. Singing of a few stanzas of a hymn.

2. Prayer before catechism.

During the Catechism.—1. Rapid review of the preceding lesson, generally by means of questions.

2. Explanation of the subject of the day: According to the case, the recital of a concrete fact or of short explanations, each being followed by questions.

3. Toward the end, a summary of the subject, a practical application, and a resolution.

[a] By his Encyclical *Acerbo nimis*, our Holy Father Pius X renews and determines the decree of the Council of Trent relating to this matter. Article I decrees that pastors and priests having the care of souls must teach catechism to their young boys and girls for the space of one hour on all Sundays and holy days of obligation. When the children are preparing to receive the sacraments of Penance and Confirmation, but especially when they are preparing for First Communion, special periods of daily catechsim should be added (Art. II, III).

After the Catechism.—1. If the subject calls for it, the assignment of a task, such as the study of the lesson by heart or the writing out of a summary.

2. Evening prayer; examination of conscience.

3. A hymn. Dismissal.

When the catechism lasts longer than a half hour it is generally divided into parts of about a half hour each. A few stanzas from one or more hymns may be sung at the end of each half hour; they will freshen the minds of the children. The subject and the method of procedure may vary with each division of the time period.

This is the plan generally followed by the Brothers of the Christian Schools. In other communities it may be modified to introduce exercises which, in ordinary class work, take place at other times: prayers, recitation of the text explained the day before, singing of hymns, illustrative stories, a homily or an exhortation, advice and announcements.

Monotony and wearisome length must be shunned. Each exercise must be relatively short, and none should keep the children too long in a purely passive attitude. The singing of hymns may alternate with recitations, questions, and stories; and these, in turn, with explanations, homilies or advice, so that, after having listened for a time, the pupil may also speak or sing in his turn.

Even the body needs change. If a lesson be a little long, it may profitably be cut in two by a short recreation in the yard, or by a march accompanied with the singing of a hymn. The teacher should vary the postures during the time of instruction. Let the pupils be seated when listening, standing when reciting or answer-

ing. They might also kneel down to say some prayers together, etc.

If the class is numerous and the principal catechist has assistants, the members might be divided into groups for certain exercises and again united for others. To make allowance for child nature within such limits as these is, in just that proportion, to lighten one's burden as catechist and prepare the way for the success of one's ministry.

3. Discipline.

The purpose of catechism is not merely to instruct children, but also to form them to a Christian life—that is, to correct them of their defects and to accustom them to the practice of virtue. To obtain this result, a wise discipline and habitual good order will be found among the principal means. The catechist will be careful to make use of them. This discipline should not consist in repression; it should rest rather on the mutual affection of pupil and teacher.

One of the first elements of good order is exactitude.

Exactitude on the Part of the Children.—An exact account should be kept of each pupil's presence or absence, whether the latter is justified or not; of his lateness, of prayers and lessons known, of good notes received, of conduct, etc.

Exactitude on the Part of the Teachers.—They should take great care not to miss a single instruction, and they should seek to be among the first arrivals, in order to watch over the children as they enter. They should begin and end exactly at the time prescribed by the regulation. This punctuality not only procures better dis-

cipline, but is also a source of great edification. The catechist shows thereby the great value that he puts on religious instruction and, in this way, teaches the children also to hold it in great esteem.

At the end of the lesson, if the catechist cannot accompany the children a part of the way from the place of assembly, he might ask their parents to call for them, or he might devise some other plan to keep watch over them after the lesson is over.

It is well to avoid having the times of arrival and dismissal the same for both boys and girls, whether or not they are to receive the instruction together. As can easily be understood, separation is far preferable. Indeed, all the catechists from St. Sulpitius to St. Charles Borromeo insist upon it when it is at all possible. When, however, there is only one catechism lesson for both boys and girls, the boys should arrive first and leave first.

Placing.—The pupils are placed at a uniform distance from one another and in such a way that the rows are open and easily supervised. The rich are discreetly intermingled with the poor. Children who are giddy, talkative or under suspicion for other reasons are placed beside those who are more serious and near the teacher, so that whatever they do amiss may be easily detected.

Previously the catechist has prepared a list of the pupils by benches or chairs, according to the order which he has chosen, and which he keeps secret from them. As they arrive, he calls them by name and places them. If, from time to time, he deems it useful to modify this arrangement, he proceeds in the same way.

The director, or superintendent, of the catechism

classes and his assistants face the pupils in such a way as to have them always before their eyes. With a look, a sign, or a word, they check even the beginnings of mischief or giddiness.

Behavior of the Pupils.—During the catechism the children remain seated, with bodies straight and heads erect, maintaining a serious and respectful demeanor. If the seats have backs, they should avoid lolling against them. They should fix their eyes upon the teacher or upon the crucifix, and either fold their arms or else join their hands upon the edge of the table or desk. The feet should be placed together and rest upon the floor.

Silence and Recollection.—Silence and recollection are indispensable for catechism. Without them neither intellectual nor Christian progress is possible. The grace of God even cannot act efficaciously in distracted, giddy souls. Hence, the teacher must watch constantly over his pupils and neglect nothing to diffuse an air of piety and recollection in the room.

Silence and recollection in both church and school depend to a great extent on the way in which the children enter. If they arrive at the door in groups, they should come in in ranks, in perfect order and silence, and avoid undue haste in going to their places. Those who arrive alone should also act becomingly in going to their places and avoid making noise with their feet or with the benches or chairs.

To establish and maintain order, the authority of the teacher is always the principal factor. However, the following three means may be pointed out:

1. Never to allow anything either in himself or in his

pupils to disturb him, especially if he knows that he is lacking in tact or skill or in power to restore order. This rule excludes levity and outbursts of loud laughter. Merriment provoked by a happy and unexpected answer revives interest, but it must neither degenerate into levity nor last too long.

Not to allow the children to speak if they ask permission noisily by snapping their fingers, nor to allow several to answer together, nor to permit them to whisper the answers to their neighbors, nor to answer without being asked. When they wish to speak, let them raise the forefinger of the right hand.

2. To make all the pupils take active part in the lesson. The catechist himself should not speak for a long time continuously, but should intersperse his explanations with many questions. Let him interrogate all the pupils every day, taking care not to follow the order of the benches all the time. Let him ask those pupils oftenest who seem to be distracted or in a day-dream.[a]

3. Lastly, and especially, to interest the pupils. A catechist who is full of his subject is interested in it himself. By the expression of his countenance, the tone of his voice, the play of his features, the changing attitude of his body according to circumstances which he describes, he captivates his hearers, he fascinates them and carries them with him. Order is then established and maintained of itself without any effort on the part of either teacher or pupils.

REGULATION.—A short and precise regulation, containing the principal points concerning the organization of the

[a] See chap. viii, p. 85.

catechism classes and an abridgment of the duties of the pupils, may be put up in the room, read publicly and commented upon at the opening lesson of the course, and from time to time during the term, according as the need may arise. If this regulation is kept faithfully, it will be found an excellent means of establishing and maintaining order and of gradually accustoming the pupils to a life of regularity and discipline.

Honors.—Another means of discipline is to engage the pupils themselves to look after the good order and progress of the catechism lessons by calling the best-behaved and the most tactful to the assistance of the catechist in some details of order or management. For this purpose certain offices or honors are established, the holders of which may be changed at relatively long intervals, as, for example, at the time of the principal feasts. The number of such offices, and their functions, will vary with the grade or importance of the course. Among them may be mentioned: A monitor, a sacristan (a like office can be established for girls), assistants, the first pupil in each row, cantors, etc.

Emulation.—The honors just referred to are a great means of emulation. But, besides these, the catechist should avail himself of ordinary means, like good notes, memorandum books, and reports; more rarely of pictures, pamphlets, booklets, etc.[a] These means should neither be systematically rejected nor too freely used. Emulation

[a] Those of the Catholic Truth Society, 409 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, are excellent for older pupils. There is also a cheap edition of the *Question Box*, prepared by the Paulist Fathers. The *Missionary*, the *Good Work*, the *Field Afar*, and the *Catholic Monthly* help to foster the missionary spirit.

is an exterior help, a stimulant, and ought not to take the place of the higher motives supplied by faith.

Above all, let the catechist beware of partiality! Let him reward effort and genuine merit rather than talent and natural facility. Let him shun exaggeration in the praise which he bestows, and let him be on his guard against always praising the same children. Let him also seize occasions to say a word of encouragement to those who are dull or backward.

He will make use of rewards as a new means of exercising an apostolate, profiting of the occasion to introduce into families objects of piety, such as crucifixes, statuettes, holy-water fonts, beads, edifying books, catechisms, prayer-books, etc. In all these cases, especially in that of pictures, he should exercise delicate tact in his choice. Let him banish pictures in which saints are represented in a vulgar or ridiculous manner. First impressions are lasting; therefore, let the sacred pictures given to children be really beautiful and worthy of the subjects which they represent.

Repression.—The means of emulation enumerated above are so much the more necessary because their judicious use will dispense with recourse to repression. Let the catechist praise virtue and reward those who practise it; as to the others, let him, without resorting to invective or punishment, be content to ignore them. This privation is often more painful to the culprits than a task or a penance; it is certainly more useful.

Of want of exactitude, the Abbé Poulin writes: "It is necessary to be on one's guard against measures that are too absolute, and to act with prudence and moderation.

The sanction must be terrible on paper, but it must be applied with gentleness and meekness. Let us especially think often of the salvation of the child and say to ourselves that the regulation is made for souls, and not souls for the regulation." [1]

[1] Congrès Catéchistique de Paris, 1908, p. 164.

CHAPTER VI.

METHOD.

SUMMARY.

1. Method in General. Divisions. Nature of Method. Induction and Deduction. Analysis and Synthesis. Their Use in Catechism.

2. Qualities of Method. *Unity:* in each Lesson, in the Course. *Order:* Necessity, Means. *Clearness:* Necessity in Thought and Exposition.

1. Method in General. Its Divisions.

The mind of man is essentially discursive; instead of grasping the nature and the causes of things at a glance, as does the angel, it travels, as it were, from one idea to another. From a known fact it endeavors to ferret out its cause; from a first principle it deduces other truths by a process of reasoning.

The way which the mind takes in its search for truth is known in logic as *method.*

Induction and Deduction.

Method is of two kinds:

In the first, the mind starts with the observation of facts. It studies like or analogous facts or phenomena and carefully arranges them in classes. After comparing these, it deduces general laws which it then seeks to explain by successive hypotheses until it finally discovers their true cause or causes. This procedure is called the *inductive method.* It applies in a special manner to the experimental and observational sciences.

In the second method, the mind starts with simple principles resulting from the process of abstraction or from truths already known and, by reasoning, draws from them other theoretical truths or certain practical consequences. This is the *deductive method,* which is proper to rational, or speculative, and pure sciences, like mathematics.

Analysis and Synthesis.

However simple or complicated a thing may be, it is perceived by the mind as a whole. But the mind does not know a whole as such until it knows the different parts and the way in which they are united. To study this, it may follow either of two plans: It may start with the whole and separate it into its parts; or, knowing the parts, it may unite them to reconstruct the whole.

These two procedures are known respectively as *analysis* and *synthesis* (division and composition). But these terms are not always used in the same sense, nor are they always used in a way that is easy to understand. Here *analysis* will be used to signify the process of dividing or breaking up, and *synthesis,* that of composing and constructing.

Since these two processes are plans followed by the mind, they may also be called methods. Thus we hear of the *analytic method* and the *synthetic method.*

In the teaching of religion these four methods—the inductive, the deductive, the analytic, and the synthetic—may be employed according to need or ability. The choice depends:

1. On the nature of the question to be treated;
2. On the end to be attained;

3. On the age, degree of advancement, etc., of the pupils.

If, for instance, it is desirable to draw a practical application from a dogmatic truth or a moral precept, the *deductive* method is to be used.

When, on the other hand, the aim is to show forth to the pupils some of the real splendor of any one of the divine perfections, such as God's goodness or mercy, events should first be recalled in which this perfection is clearly manifest, as the pardon granted to David, to Mary Magdalen, or to St. Peter. Then the method is *inductive.*

In order to explain an answer in the catechism, the teacher may divide it into parts and take these up one after another in proper order. He then uses the *analytic* method.

If, however, after mentally dividing up an answer, he presents the elements first to his pupils and then proceeds, with their coöperation, to piece them together, he follows the *synthetic* method.

2. The Qualities of Method.

The qualities of method are *unity, order* and *clearness.*

Unity.

Unity is a quality necessary both to each lesson and to the whole course. It should also characterize the relations and connections between the different courses.

First of all, there should be unity in each lesson.

Each day the catechist must have a new and well-defined subject. If the subject is too extensive to be limited to one lesson, it should be divided in such a way that

every part is distinct and forms a kind of mental whole.[a]

This is a fundamental rule. In every literary or artistic composition, in every discourse, as well as in the humblest instruction in catechism, there should be *one dominant idea,* around which are ranged the secondary ideas, the comparisons, examples, etc., contributing to place it in bold relief. In this way it becomes the center from which the details radiate and to which they point. It is their bond of union and helps to root them securely in the understanding and fix them in the memory.

With this dominant idea is a second element, intimately connected with it, and contributing *unity* to an instruction. In a catechism, as in a meditation or a sermon, there should be a practical end in view—viz.: progress in virtue. In treating each subject, the catechist, therefore, proposes to himself a special end toward which he makes all things tend, even unknown to his pupils. The *dominant idea* and the *special practical end* are, therefore, the elements of unity in an instruction.

Two means in particular serve to make this unity conspicuous: the first is to announce clearly and distinctly at the beginning of the lesson both the subject and its division; the second is to give a brief summary of the lesson just before concluding it. The recapitulation may be made by either teacher or pupils.

Unity should also mark the order and the interconnection of the different lessons. Each of them should be so linked with the preceding as to reveal the harmony pervading the entire series.

[a] This is what Professor De Garmo means by "method-wholes" in his book on the *Essentials of Method* (Heath & Co.).

At the beginning of each lesson, briefly recall the subject of the preceding lesson and show the connection between it and the one of to-day:

"Yesterday, my dear children, we said that there are three theological virtues. We have already explained Faith and Hope. It now remains to speak of Charity, the most beautiful of the three. By Faith we believe in God; by Hope we look for the happiness of possessing Him in heaven; but by Charity we love Him with our whole heart even here below."

This introduction may likewise be thrown into the form of a dialogue made up of questions and answers.

—What did we speak of yesterday?
—What is hope?
—How many theological virtues are there?
—Which virtues have we already explained?
—What, then, should be the subject of to-day's catechism?

It is also of no little importance to bind together the different parts of Christian doctrine—viz.: dogma, moral, worship, and sacred history. For example, after explaining a point of dogma, the catechist should call attention to the moral consequences that follow from it, the acts of worship that manifest faith in this dogma, the facts of sacred history that refer to it, etc.

Lastly, unity should also characterize the entire plan of teaching for the successive classes, so that the programs, although more or less extensive, according to the age or the needs of the pupils, may yet in their general outlines be like one another, as has already been said in speaking of *concentric programs*.[a]

[a] See chap. iv, p. 43.

Order.

Order is essential to method. The very word *method* involves the notion of order; for without order all idea of method vanishes.

If the catechist would have his pupils thoroughly grounded in their religion, he must strive to bring order as well as unity to every lesson, to the program of each course, and to the relations between the programs of the various courses.

Order results from a good division, from a well-laid plan. For the teacher such a plan facilitates *invention;* for the pupil it aids *memory.* Hence, it should be simple and transparent, to enable the pupils to perceive it clearly and, with its help, to follow the instruction more easily.

Order should extend even to the details of the lesson, to the distribution of leading ideas and proofs, of examples and stories. Every item should come in its proper time. A comparison or a story introduced too soon would make hardly any impression at all, or, at least, would fail to make the impression intended.

However, this order in the arrangement of details should not be made known to the pupils beforehand; it is better to surprise them. For them the general plan or outline is sufficient. As their curiosity is now aroused, they will follow the development of the subject with more relish, and their hearts will be more easily touched; while, were the opposite method followed, their efforts would be limited almost exclusively to the understanding and the memory, to the detriment of the will.

Each course should have a clearly defined program suited to the age and the capacity of the pupils. It should

also take account of the liturgic seasons to make the explanation of a group of truths coincide as much as possible with the solemnities commemorating these truths.

Once this general order has been fixed, it should rarely be deviated from, and then for only serious reasons.

Clearness.

Of himself the child cannot long apply himself. His mind is like a butterfly, going ceaselessly from one object to another, according to the caprice of sense or imagination. Although it loves the light, yet, to a certain extent, the light must come to it; it should not be obliged to make special efforts to procure it. It is, therefore, by making the truths which he teaches sparkle before the eyes of his pupils that the catechist will succeed in holding their roving minds in check.

But to give a luminous instruction, the catechist must have clear ideas himself. These ideas refer to three objects:

1. The matter which he is to teach.

The catechist ought to know just what he is going to say, not only in a general way, but in all its details. Here, perhaps, more than elsewhere, are the words of Boileau verified:

> "What one conceives distinctly is announced clearly, and the words to express it come easily."

2. The intellectual and moral state of his pupils.

How far, by reason of the age and culture of the children, are their faculties developed? What knowledge have they acquired? What are their moral dispositions, their sentiments, their inclinations, their passions?

3. The plan to follow.

How am I to act to get such a result, to instill easily and agreeably such and such truths in their minds, or to produce such and such impressions on their wills?

But clearness is a necessity not in the teacher's thoughts only; it must also mark his manner of setting them forth. To this end two things help:

1. The order and the interconnection of the ideas.

Let him remember that he is speaking to children; that their minds travel slowly and grasp few ideas at a time. Hence, let him beware of precipitation in his exposition and of gaps in his reasoning. Let him not jump to remote conclusions, but take all the intermediate ones first. Otherwise the children will not be able to follow him.

Let him also keep faithfully this pedagogic rule which there will be occasion to recall often in the course of this book:

Always proceed from the *known* to the *unknown,* from the *proximate* to the *remote,* from the *simple* or *elementary* to the *complex* or *compound,* from the *concrete* to the *abstract,* from the *particular* to the *general;* and, as a consequence, from the *example* to the *precept,* from the *thing to be defined* to the *definition,* from the *idea* or *notion* to the *term* which expresses is.

2. The choice of expressions, or, in other words, the language suited to the age and development of the pupils.

CHAPTER VII.

INTUITION.

SUMMARY.

1. The Principal Mark of a Good Method. A Natural or Intuitive Method.

2. Means of Making Abstract Ideas Palpable to Sense. *Comparisons:* Qualities, Sources, Use. *Parables:* Rules, Models. *Examples:* Nature, Application. *Stories:* Qualities, Bible Stories, Practical Rules. *Pictures:* Utility, Quality, Use, Stereopticon Views.

1. The Principal Mark of a Good Method.

The essential mark of a good method is *naturalness*—that is, if we restrict it to our present subject, it should be adapted to the nature of the child and to the laws governing the development of his faculties.

Man's intellectual life is fed by the senses, and it is only by degrees that he rises from the sensile to the supersensible. Moreover, the human mind develops slowly, and in the child the senses dominate. "It may be said in a certain sense that when children come into the world, their mere animal nature largely prevails, and that mind and matter assume their respective parts only with time."[1] For this reason abstract terms, general statements, and definitions are indigestible food for children, and fill them with disgust. Such language is suited to an intellectual stage which they have not yet reached. But the particular and the concrete, the visible and the

[1] St. John Baptist de la Salle, *Meditations on School*, p. 22.

palpable; in a word, whatever is accessible to the senses, this is within their capacity.

This psychologic law indicates the way to follow in all rational teaching. It should start with sense observation and lead the pupil step by step, developing his spontaneous activity, until he forms abstract notions. This is easy when the object studied belongs to the material world and may be subject to the senses either directly, or indirectly by means of pictures or similar representations. But with abstract and supersensible notions it is otherwise. Here it is necessary to transform them and to present them to the child mind under a sensile form by means of examples and comparisons. Hence, the advantage of the intuitive or objective method when used with discretion.

Besides, this method is very ancient. Indeed, what is all creation but an intuitive process destined to make visible and palpable the invisible perfections of God Himself?[1] The ocean is an imperfect image of His immensity; the heavens tell His glory, and every created being reflects some degree of His power and wisdom.

The Old Testament is full of comparisons and allegories. Our Lord Himself habitually taught by these means. His discourses to the people abound in parables and comparisons to such an extent that the Evangelist says: *Without parable He did not speak to them.*[2]

The Church has followed in the footsteps of her divine Founder. Her temples, her liturgy, and the sacraments themselves are a magnificent and perpetual course of object

[1] Rom. 1, 20. [2] Mark iv, 33, 34.

lessons.[a] What zeal has she not displayed in defending sacred images against those who attacked them, the iconoclasts of ancient and of modern times? In this respect our modern pedagogy can teach her nothing. It has invented nothing; in exalting the value of intuitive procedure, it has but returned to the soundest traditions of antiquity.[b]

2. Means of Rendering Abstract Ideas Palpable to Sense.

These means are: *Comparisons, parables, examples, stories, pictures, statues,* and *stereopticon views.*

Comparisons.

Comparisons help us to grasp more easily an object that is unknown, or abstract, or subtile, for they bring to our aid a known sensile object in which we discover some analogy with the unknown. In the teaching of religion, comparisons are frequently used, for they help us to understand truths of the intellectual or speculative order, as well as moral or practical truths.

A good comparison should be:

1. *Clear.* The object which is used to effect an understanding of the idea, and which may be called the *term of comparison,* should be known to the pupils. It was for this reason that our Lord, in addressing Himself to simple folk, for the most part fishermen or tillers of the soil, drew His comparisons from the commonest things:

[a] In his *Psychology of Education,* Rev. Dr. Shields, of the Catholic University, develops this idea.

[b] See St. Jerome's Letter to Laeta, containing rules for the education of her daughter, St. Paula the Younger, quoted in Butler's *Lives of the Saints,* vol. 9, p. 794.

boats, fish, fields, vines, trees, dinner, master and servant, father of a family, etc. Were the catechist to choose a comparison drawn from a science of which the children as yet know nothing, he would give them no explanation at all, for they could neither understand nor relish the comparison.

2. *Just.* Yet it should not be so transparent as to lose all the attraction of novelty. The pupils must find in it something ingenious which they would not have found out of themselves. The surprise and the pleasure of the discovery are principal elements of success.

3. *Becoming.* Neither in its object nor in its form should the comparison be vulgar or trivial.

4. *Brief.* When too extended it degenerates into description; it distracts the children and turns their attention away from the principal topic instead of leading it thereto.

Three sources of comparison may be indicated:

1. The external world. This is an immense book, open to all, wherein, with a little reflection, each one may discover numberless harmonies between the things of nature and reason and those of grace and faith. What a happy use of this book was made by St. Francis de Sales and the Curé d'Ars!

2. Holy Scripture, and especially the Gospels. Therein we may find a great number of comparisons employed as such; and, besides, we shall discover that the language of the Bible is rich in metaphors which may easily be developed.

3. Select works rich in comparisons. Such are those of St. Francis de Sales, Rodriguez, P. Segneri, V. P. Claret,

Father Faber, etc. In the Catechisms of Examples there is a great collection already classified. But the catechist will find that the best for his purpose are often those that he himself prepares.

These practical counsels may be added:

1. Don't multiply comparisons excessively. To explain an idea, one comparison is sufficient; if more are given, the child's mind knows not which to appropriate.

2. Introduce the comparison by different turns of expression, using sometimes conjunctive words like *as, just as,* etc.; sometimes verbs like *imagine, picture to yourselves;* or, again, interrogations: *Who has not seen such a thing? Who does not know that . . . ?*

3. In explaining the mysteries of faith, especially, use great reserve. Every comparison halts. Often the notion of a mystery is diminished and obscured, rather than explained, by a comparison.

Parables.

A *parable* is a developed comparison. It is an allegory in which, under the form of historic fiction, appear all the leading traits of the truth to be explained.

The rules for the composition and the use of parables are the same as for comparisons, except that here brevity is relative. There must be nothing subtile or exaggerated. Neither should the traits of the allegory be multiplied as if everything possible had to be got from the subject once for all. Have a determinate end in view and keep to it; make no circumstances important unless they refer to that end.

As regards their style and diction, parables are like

stories, and, therefore, this aspect will be considered later on.

The Gospels give us many admirable models of parables. Some are purely narrative in form; others make use of dialogue. In several, like that of the unforgiving servant,[1] the dramatic form is complete: personages, action, dialogue, sentiments and passions—all are there. Others are doubled, as it were, and, by contrast, add greatly to the interest. Such are the parables of the sinful rich man and poor Lazarus,[2] of the Pharisee and the publican,[3] of the good shepherd and the hireling,[4] etc.

Examples.

The word *example* is here used in the sense in which it is taken in grammars and other didactic treatises. After each definition or rule, an example is given—that is, a practical case is stated applying the rule, with a view to showing better its meaning and its scope.

It has been said that examples are like verdant oases in the desert. Fatigued by theory and abstraction, the mind rests and gains new strength when it sees the idea embodied in a concrete case.

It is particularly in the teaching of morals that recourse must be had to examples. For instance, little cases of conscience can be proposed to the children and they can be called upon to decide them. In this way they may come to distinguish clearly between mortal sin and venial sin, and to understand better the nature of grievous matter, perfect consent, vincible and invincible ignorance, sins of thought or desire, etc.

[1] Matt. xviii. [2] Luke xvi, 19-31. [3] Luke xviii, 10-14. [4] John x, 11-16.

One evening James calls at John's rooms, intending to pay him a friendly visit. He finds him out, but his attention is attracted by the ticking of his friend's watch, which lies on the table before him. Now, James has not a watch himself, and the idea enters his mind of taking John's watch. "No one saw me enter the house," he says to himself, "and no one will suspect me of the theft." And, with that, he draws nearer to the table and stretches out his hand to seize the coveted object.

But at that very moment he hears a step on the stairway. It is John coming back. James turns around and greets his friend without betraying any sign of what had been passing through his mind. After a short interview, he departs, regretting that he did not get the watch, but still believing his conscience free from guilt because, as a matter of fact, he did not steal the watch. Now, tell me, Stephen, was he right? Was he, or was he not, guilty of sin?

STEPHEN.—No, teacher, he did not sin.

TEACHER.—And what do you think, Joseph?

JOSEPH.—Yes, teacher, he did commit sin.

TEACHER.—Now, Stephen, why do you think that James did not sin?

STEPHEN.—Because he did not steal the watch.

TEACHER.—And you, Joseph, why do you think that James did sin?

JOSEPH.—Because James wanted to steal the watch. If he did not actually steal it, it was because he could not do so without being found out.

The teacher now questions other pupils on the subject, and then, after a few moments, gives his decision. "It is a fact, my dear children, that James consented to theft in his heart. Therefore, he was guilty of sin. It was an interior sin, a sin of *desire*."

Examples should satisfy several conditions:

1. They should come to the point—that is, they should

really be cases of the truth which the catechist wishes to explain.

2. They should be drawn from things known to the pupils.

3. They should be becoming, free from everything that might offend against propriety or charity.

It is necessary to guard carefully against allusions either to faults which the children are known to have committed, or to defects of their parents or of other persons whom they are bound to respect. There must always be consideration for the legitimate delicacy or sensitiveness of children. The teacher might say: "I do not say, children, that you do commit such sins. If I speak of them at all, it is to enable you the better to understand what I am teaching you."

To show esteem for children is to supply them with a good incentive to merit that esteem.

Stories.

Nothing is better suited to excite and sustain the attention of pupils than well-chosen stories. Children are passionately fond of them. Such stories make the catechism pleasant; they illustrate truths, are easily fixed in the memory, and leave lasting impressions of virtue in the soul. Stories, therefore, unite in the highest degree the advantages of comparisons, parables, and examples. They are the principal, and, in the case of very young children, almost the only, oral means of intuitive teaching. Hence, the teacher should not be afraid to make use of them.

To be suited to the end proposed by the catechist, they should possess several qualities. They should be:

1. *True.* We ought to have such respect for religious teaching as to introduce nothing but what is certain. Apocryphal stories diminish esteem for religion and even give rise to doubt concerning matters of revelation.

2. *Serious* and really connected with the topic in hand. Pointless or impertinent stories, told merely to interest the children, if not to make them laugh, would introduce levity among the pupils and destroy their respect for the word of God.

3. *Remarkable* either for their matter or for some circumstance that actually gives them exceptional value. Children are interested in what is grand and heroic. He does not know them who thinks that they will be captivated by common stories taken from ordinary life.

The best stories are given in Holy Scripture:

1. They are authentic. The truth of the events narrated is guaranteed by God's own word.

2. A great number are charming. What pleasure children take in hearing the story of Joseph sold by his brethren; of Moses saved from the Nile; of Tobias traveling with the angel Raphael; of Daniel in the lions' den; of the three young men in the fiery furnace; and the whole life of Jesus Christ, especially His childhood, His passion, His resurrection and His ascension!

3. Being the word of God, they have special efficacy for enlightening souls and leading them to holiness.

4. The marvelous and the supernatural are often strikingly manifested. As children have a craving for the marvelous, it is no small benefit for them to be reared in this supernatural atmosphere, so diametrically opposed to the positivistic naturalism of our day.

5. Often the Holy Ghost Himself points out the moral application or suggests the judgment to be pronounced on persons and events. This is not the case with the facts of profane history. These we know only on the testimony of men, and we are, besides, exposed to more errors than one in interpreting these facts.

Great discretion must be exercised in pronouncing an estimate on contemporaneous events. They are unquestionably permitted and directed by God's providence, but it is not given to us to penetrate His secrets. In the New Law, in particular, external blessings and evils are not always in exact accord with the merits of men. God afflicts the just to purify them still more, and to add to the brilliancy of their crown; while He is meek and long-suffering toward sinners, in order to give them time to repent. He has all eternity in which to punish those hardened sinners who refuse to profit by His mercy.

A story that is appropriate for catechism is not such as is intended to gratify idle curiosity. It looks to a practical end, like the explanation of a dogmatic truth or of a principle of moral conduct. This purpose the catechist should not lose light of, nor should he forget the more general end and aim of all instruction, viz.: love of God. Such is the statement of St. Augustine: "Narrate it in such a manner that he to whom you are discoursing, *on hearing may believe; on believing may hope; on hoping may love.*" [1]

In these stories there must be order, clearness, simplicity, and interest. Use direct discourse: make the per-

[1] *On the Catechising of the Uninstructed,* chap. iv. See vol. iii. Christian Literature Society, Buffalo, 1887.

sonages act and speak so that the children will imagine that they see and hear them. Be brief in descriptions of persons and places; introduce only such details as are necessary in view of the end which you seek; but do not omit those little circumstances that strike the imagination.

Abstain from digressions and long considerations. A first narrative should be like a sketch made with one stroke of the brush. Don't interrupt it by questions or by explanations of words. The necessary *explanations* should *precede* the narrative. The *questions* should be reserved *for the end.*

A long story may be divided, provided that each part can be made the subject of a particular narrative.

When the narrative is finished, take it up again part by part, in order to aid the memory of the pupils. The first time that they hear a story, their attention is absorbed in the substance. They are rarely capable of repeating it at once. But when their curiosity is satisfied, they will notice more clearly the trend of the narrative and the nature of the different circumstances.

When you have finished the story, let the children speak. Make them repeat what you have told them. In the beginning, help them with questions. Correct and supplement what they say. Have them again repeat the tale until they have fixed it deep in their memory.

Make certain that they have grasped the truth or the lesson that formed the main reason for telling the tale. Accustom them to pronounce judgment: What do you think of such a person? Of such another? Which was the better? Which worse? What would you have done in the place of the former? Of the latter?

Train the pupils gradually to tell the story well. A child who knows a story takes pleasure in telling it. He becomes an apostle; his innocence and guilelessness add a charm to the recital and dispose his hearers to profit by it.

Pictures and Cognate Representations.

Comparisons, parables, stories, and examples speak to the imagination; pictures and statues speak to the eyes.

Pictures, statues, sculptures, stereoscopic views, stereopticon illustrations, etc., are most excellent means of giving object lessons. They serve to instruct the ignorant, for, says St. Gregory the Great, "What writing is to the lettered, the sight of pictures is to those who cannot read." They excite sentiments of piety in souls and, by recalling the examples of the saints, encourage us to walk in their footsteps.

But these pictures and statues must possess several qualities. They must be:

1. *True*—that is, they must be in conformity with the story or the ideas which they represent; and in conformity also with the traditions of the Church.[1]

2. *Becoming,* bearing the stamp of perfect propriety and of at least correct design. They must exclude what is ridiculous, disproportionate, etc.

3. *Clear,* not overburdened with personages and accessories distracting the mind from the principal theme.

4. When they are intended for use in a classroom or assembly hall, they must be *large enough* to be seen by the pupils from their respective places, not only in their general outline, but also in their interesting details.

[1] See *Index Legislation,* by Rev. Timothy Hurley, D. D., Chap. vi. (Benziger Brothers).

Few give satisfaction in this last respect, particularly when the class is large. But to-day a means to supply this defect is found in stereopticon illustrations. Powerful lanterns may be had, with series of magnificent slides, which may be used with great benefit in reviews. If the class is small, the stereoscope might be used.

When should the picture or other representation be shown—before the narrative, during it, or at its close?

That depends on circumstances and on the end in view:

1. A picture generally represents only an important episode in a story. If, then, it is shown before the teacher reaches this episode, it distracts the children, who give their attention to it rather than to the story. It is, therefore, better to wait for the corresponding moment in the story, or even to show the picture only after finishing the narrative; for then it would serve as a kind of review. By questioning, the teacher can bring out the details and the general purport of the story. The pupil who is called upon to answer can, at the same time, indicate the persons and objects in the picture, by means of a pointer.

2. In the case of a long story, like that of Joseph or of the Passion of our Lord, if the catechist has a series of pictures representing the different episodes, he can display each picture at the time when he is describing the episode. In this way he will produce a more striking effect.

3. It may happen that he takes the picture as a starting point for his explanations. This may be the case particularly in catechism lessons. The picture represents a concrete fact in which we find, as in a story, details suggesting the elements of doctrine. In such a case, the lesson may begin with an explanation of the picture.

The catechist who intends to make use of a picture should have studied it in advance, in order to adapt his explanations to its character.

It is better not to leave the pictures constantly before the eyes of the pupils, lest they lose the attraction of novelty and weaken the impression which they might otherwise produce.

NOTE.—From these principles it is easy to draw up some rules for the use of moving pictures when they are sufficiently developed to become part of the equipment of catechism classes.[1]

[1] At the Diocesan House of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 416 Lafayette Street, New York City, there is a permanent exhibit of Sunday school aids and appliances.

CHAPTER VIII.

FORMS OF TEACHING.

SUMMARY.

General Idea and Division of the Subject.
1. The Expository Form. When and How to use it.
2. The Socratic Form. Utility and Necessary Conditions.
3. The Dialogue Form. Questions asked by the Pupils—Practical Directions.

To teach is to impart one's ideas to another. The means of communicating ideas is language, spoken or written.

In an oral lesson, the teaching may take one of three different forms:

1. Only the teacher speaks, developing the subject of the lesson in continuous discourse. This is the *expository* form.

2. He tries to have the pupils discover the truth or its elements, guiding them by questions. This is the *Socratic* form.

3. He engages in a kind of dialogue with his pupils, sometimes asking them questions, at other times making replies. This is the *dialogue* or *catechetic* form.

Each of these procedures has its value and may be employed to advantage in the teaching of religion. One proof of the skill of the catechist is his ability to choose promptly the one that is most suitable in a given case, and to pass easily from one form to another when necessary.

1. The Expository Form.

The expository form is good especially in two circumstances:

1. When the teacher is treating topics of which the children as yet know nothing.

He should never ask them for what they don't know, nor for what they cannot easily find out for themselves.

2. When he wishes chiefly to move their hearts and wills, as in reflections and exhortations.

From this it will appear that, in the teaching of religion, the expository form should be looked upon as fundamental, and that for two reasons:

1. The Christian doctrine is in large part made up of historic facts or dogmas which we have learned by revelation. Here invention has no field. The catechist speaks with authority in the name of the Church and of our Lord Himself.

2. In the teaching of religion, it is much less important to exercise the mind than to move the heart to pious sentiments and holy resolutions. To obtain this result, the expository form is much better than questioning.

But it must be used with moderation. A skillful teacher speaks little, but makes the children speak much. In general the latter are incapable of attending to long discourses. Hence, it is necessary often to ask them retrospective questions, particularly when explaining doctrines. If you tell them a story, they listen to you willingly and without fatigue; but when you come to definitions or other abstract matters, they can no longer sustain their attention.

If, then, the explanation is a little long, divide it into parts, making these shorter in proportion as the minds of the pupils are young and untrained. If these divisions are prepared in advance, they will form a well-ordered unit and will easily be remembered.

After explaining a part, review it at once by questioning. This interrogation has three advantages:

1. It keeps up and renews attention;

2. It repeats the explanation without making the fact obvious to the children;

3. It enables the teacher to learn whether the explanation is understood.

In preparing his exposition, the catechist should have in view the subsequent work of questioning, just as, when questioning, he should have in mind the answers that he seeks to get. So it is that in the thought of the teacher the answer precedes the question, as the foreseen question determines the character that he gives to the exposition.

2. The Socratic Form.

The Socratic form appeals particularly to the intellect; it stimulates it by questions and guides it in its search for truth. It is well suited to the sciences in which reason predominates, but it has its place also in the teaching of religion:

1. When the teacher wishes to appeal to the child's faculties, to make him reflect on certain ideas, to lead him to find others by analogy, to enable him to discover and to rectify an error, etc.;

2. When he seeks to develop truths of the natural order;

3. When he deduces practical applications from a doctrine, decides cases of morals, forms an estimate of facts, etc.

When rightly handled, this form of teaching is well adapted to hold the attention. It is in close conformity with the nature of the mind, which, in this way, acquires

truth with less effort and cleaves to it with strong conviction. But it demands of the catechist a perfect knowledge of his subject, entire self-possession, great skill in the art of questioning, and, above all, great patience with the pupils. He must never take offense at an inexact answer, nor must he hurry on to give the question to a more advanced pupil, in order to come to an end more quickly. The fact that an intelligent pupil would have given a good answer is no proof that the others have understood the subject.

3. The Dialogue Form.

As its name indicates, the dialogue form is a conversation between master and pupils. Not only do the latter listen to the former and reply to his questions; they may also in turn interrogate him. In the Gospels there are many examples of this form of teaching: the conversations of our Lord with His Apostles, with the Samaritan woman,[1] with Nicodemus,[2] etc. In the temple of Jerusalem Jesus listened to the doctors of the law, replied to their questions, and interrogated them.[3]

It may happen that children, and particularly young men and young women, need to question the catechist on the meaning of a word or on the bearing of an explanation which they have not understood; to lay before him a doubt or an objection which they have heard and the solution of which they do not know.

This liberty of asking questions is calculated to foster confidence between teacher and pupils; but it supposes that the catechist possesses thorough knowledge of his subject and enjoys great authority.

[1] John iv. [2] John iii. [3] Luke ii, 46-47.

In large classes, particularly of young pupils, this form is not practicable; it is better suited to a limited audience of adults, or to young people who already possess some instruction in religion.

The catechist should accept only questions asked in good faith, rejecting such as are idle or too far-fetched. He must look to it also that the conversation does not degenerate into polemics or barren discussion.

In general, he should suffer no one to interrupt his exposition by questions, for it often happens that in the course of the catechism he, of his own accord, answers the doubts and difficulties that arise in the minds of his hearers.

To avoid the delays and digressions which such questions from his pupils might occasion, he might reserve a special lesson for their consideration after finishing a subject. Thus forewarned, the pupils could prepare their questions and even, as is always most prudent, give them in writing to the catechist before that date.

He will often be surprised to find how many things, simple in themselves and very clear in his own mind, are obscure to his pupils. Questions that are remarkably naïve may also come up unexpectedly. In such cases let him beware of laughing or allowing the other pupils to laugh. The questioner would then become intimidated, as perhaps also several of his classmates, and he would never dare ask a question again.

CHAPTER IX.

QUESTIONING.

SUMMARY.

1. Questions. Kinds, Qualities, Defects to Avoid. Kinds of Questioning. Rules for Socratic Questioning, for Recitation, for Examination.

2. Answers. Qualities. How to Act when the Answer is Good, when Defective; when the Pupil gives no Answer.

Whatever be the form of teaching, a leading part in it is always taken up by questions. It is necessary, therefore, to examine of what sort should be:

1. The questions put by the teacher.

2. The answers given by the pupil.

1. Questions.

"A good question," said Bacon, "is half of science." In a particular sense it may be called the special tool of the catechist. By it he rouses the mind, awakens curiosity, and revives the memory of forgotten things; in a word, by it he directs the intellectual activity of his pupils. To learn to handle this tool with all possible skill ought, therefore, to be one of the principal cares of the catechist.

Questions may have a threefold object:

1. To ascertain whether the child has understood and retained what has been explained. Such are *review* and *examination* questions.

2. To teach something new by means of something already known; to direct the child's mind in its quest of a

truth or a practical application. These are Socratic questions, the chief instruments of education.

3. To draw attention to what is about to be said. These are *stimulating* questions, and appeal to the intelligence of the hearer by pointing out clearly to him the object to be explained.

This last kind of question is rather a form of style, an oratorical artifice, than a question properly so called. Indeed, it is often called a *rhetorical* question. Hence, although it occupies much space in books which, like the catechism, are cast in the form of question and answer, it will not be treated in this chapter.

Every question should have four qualities. It should be:

1. *Short,* in order that the pupil may grasp it at once and be able to give an answer.

2. *Simple,* framed in familiar style, stated in words easily understood. This simplicity, however, should not prevent it from being dignified and grammatically correct.

3. *Clear,* always put in the interrogative form, not in the form of an affirmative sentence, in which only the rising inflection of the voice reveals any intention of questioning: God *orders us?* He *rewards?* And He *punishes?*

Ordinarily the question should be formulated as a complete sentence. When, however, as already indicated above, the meaning is quite clear, the interrogative word may be used alone: *Why? How?*

Lastly, the question should be stated in a tone of voice sufficiently loud and distinct to be heard by the whole class. The interrogative word, or the word that contains the principal idea, should be emphasized.

4. *Precise,* leading to a definite end, including only one principal idea, and suggesting only one answer.

Against these directions the following questions sin:

1. *Double* questions; for example: *When* and *how* did Jesus Christ institute the Holy Eucharist?

2. *Ambiguous* questions, as, *Is the Mass obligatory? Yes* and *No,* according to circumstances.

What do you think of Saul? What do you know of David?

Nevertheless, complex questions may be used in making recapitulations and in drawing up the program of a written exercise. It is then the duty of the pupil to separate them into their parts.

Viewed in a general way, questioning takes different forms according to the kind of exercise to which it is applied. Thus we have *catechetical* or *Socratic questions, recitation questions,* and *examination questions.* To this last form often belong the *review* questions which, in catechism, follow historical or doctrinal expositions.

Each of these forms has its special rules, which may now be indicated in order.

Socratic Questioning.

In matter as well as form, the questions should be adapted to the capacity of the pupils. They should be neither too easy nor too difficult. When too easy, they favor idleness and levity; when too difficult, they beget discouragement.

The first questions should bear on things about which the pupils can readily give answers, in order that, at the very outset, they may not be reduced to silence. Then,

step by step, they can be brought to face more difficult questions.

Give the easy questions to the backward pupils; the difficult ones to the more advanced.

Follow a carefully outlined plan. In general, a new question should spring from the preceding answer. If at times the catechist is obliged to deviate from the proposed program, let him return to it as quickly as possible.

The questions should be varied in form and should follow one another quickly; yet so as to leave time for reflection. The pupils should be helped as little as possible by signs or other mechanical means.

Often it is wise to ask the question before indicating the pupil who is to give the answer. In this way, the members of the class are kept on the alert; but they should not be suffered to answer together. Each one should be asked and should answer in his turn.

When a pupil who is asked does not answer at all or gives a poor answer, some catechists turn at once to those who habitually answer best. This is a grave abuse and a source of not a few delusions. Without his being aware of it, the teacher who has contracted this habit has really come to the pass of instructing only three or four pupils out of the whole class, a most deplorable state of affairs, as he will recognize on examination day, when it will be too late to apply a remedy.

The catechist must avoid:

1. Useless questions, questions that distract attention from the main theme.

2. Imprudent questions, which might stir up dangerous reflections, doubts concerning faith, misplaced curiosity

with reference to the mysteries, or thoughts contrary to sound morality.

3. With even more reason, all questions that assume an error as truth; for example: *What sins can indulgences remit?*

4. Questions that may be answered merely by *Yes* or *No*. Such questions should rarely be put. They may be addressed, however, to very young children or to dull pupils, or even to timid scholars, in order to encourage them.

Recitation Questions.

Recitation is a simple form of control; its purpose is to ascertain whether the children have studied the lesson.

The following points are to be observed:

1. Not to begin the recitation invariably with the same pupils nor with the beginning of the lesson. In other words, it is necessary to avoid following the same order always, and to skip at times from one part of the text to another.

2. Every day to ask questions of as many children as possible.

3. To keep the recitation lively and animated. As soon as the teacher sees that one pupil knows the lesson, let him pass to the next pupil.

4. Not to repeat the question when going from one pupil to another. The observance of this rule is a means of keeping all the children constantly attentive.

5. To encourage the timid by occasionally telling them the first word, especially when the beginning of the answer is not suggested by the question.

Yet ordinarily it is rather by questioning that the teacher should help the pupil's memory, by making him reflect and thus find the lost thread of his thought.

6. Not to intermingle reflections or commentaries with the recitation. These should be kept for another time.

Examination Questions.

The purpose of examinations is not merely to ascertain that the pupil has retained what he has learned from the book or from the professor, but also that he has understood it and is now able to apply it. To secure this result, the following means may be suggested:

1. Divide up the answers that admit of division. Ask separately for each of the parts of the answer. This division may also apply to written examinations, as will be shown in the following chapter.

2. Use equivalent questions.

3. Transform the answer into a question.

4. Question on particular concrete cases.

5. Question on likes and opposites.

6. Make the children find examples and particular cases.

So understood, examination is an excellent exercise. It clarifies ideas and roots them deep in the mind.

2. Answers.

This section does not refer to the answers contained in the book, for these the children merely recite; but to those which they compose themselves in the course of the lesson in response to the teacher's questions.

A good answer must possess several qualities. It must be:

1. *Personal,* the result of reflection on the part of the child, without any suggestion or prompting from his neighbor or the catechist himself.

It is impossible to censure too severely the deplorable habit of prompting by successive insinuations up to the last word, and sometimes even to the last syllable.

It is only by sub-questions that the teacher should help the child to find the answer.

2. *Individual.* Only the child who is questioned should answer; the other pupils should listen in silence and await their turn.

3. *Deliberate,* without precipitation. The catechist himself should remain calm, and allow the pupils sufficient time to answer.

4. *Clear,* as to idea, expression and enunciation.

5. *Exact,* excluding all error.

6. *Entire,* in both matter and form.

It is incomplete in matter if it contains only a part of what has been asked; for example: *What is contrition?* Contrition is sorrow for having offended God. This lacks the second part of the answer: "With a firm purpose of sinning no more."

As to form, the answer should generally be a complete sentence. This may be obtained by including the question in the answer; for example: *Where does man's soul go after death?* Correct but abridged answer: "Before the judgment seat of God." Complete answer: "After death, man's soul appears before the judgment seat of God."

This complete form the catechist should insist upon for all important answers, but for secondary questions he may

allow shortened answers. Besides, the form of the answer depends greatly on the form of the question. Ordinarily a complete question leads to a complete answer; an abridged question to a shortened answer.

When a child is questioned, he either gives an answer or he does not; if he answers, his reply may be either good or defective.

Unless it is impertinent, the answer should always be received kindly. If it is good, the teacher should express his approval; a sign may suffice. If it is not exact, he must take care not to reject it at once or repel the child by an impatient gesture or a harsh word. He should try to lead the child, by means of sub-questions, to make the necessary corrections.

He might also appeal to the judgment of the other pupils. When several of them give different opinions, he should not be in a hurry to give the solution, but should rather keep them for some minutes in suspense. He will thus intensify their curiosity and cause them to listen to the answer with more interest.

When an answer is only half correct or is incomplete, the teacher should approve the part that is satisfactory and continue to ply questions to secure the correction of the other part.

If, when questioned, a child should remain silent, the catechist should try to find out the cause of his embarrassment. Perhaps he did not understand the question; perhaps he is wanting in the terms necessary to formulate an answer; perhaps he is too timid to reply; or perhaps he is absolutely ignorant of the answer.

In the first two cases it would be well to put the ques-

tion in another form, and then to help the child by sub-questions.

If it is from timidity that the child hesitates to speak, encourage him, praise his efforts, and, by simple and easy questions, enable him to gain such slight successes as will embolden him to give the desired answer.

Lastly, if the child remains silent because he is unable to answer, it is again necessary to resort to sub-questions, seeking in known objects analogies that suggest the answer. If no success follows, it is then time for the teacher to speak to the other pupils or to give the answer himself; but this he should do patiently, without invective or reproach. He is there to aid the children, not to subject them to humiliation or throw them into a state of discouragement.

Then the correct answer should be repeated by one of the pupils who did not know it, and, if it is important, by several of them.

CHAPTER X.

MEMORY.

SUMMARY.

1. The Legitimate Function of Memory. Necessity of Learning by Heart, Choice of Material: First Understand, then Learn.

2. Pedagogic Directions. No Cramming; How to Study; Oral Method. Blackboard. Reviews.

1. The Legitimate Function of Memory.

Nothing is actively retained by the memory but what is deeply engraved on it. In the prime of life we recall perfectly only those lessons which as children we learned so thoroughly by heart that it was impossible to make us miss them. Hence the importance of memory, especially in the teaching of religion.

The Christian religion is not mere theory; it is rather a practical science, intended to direct the conduct of our whole life. Hence, it is important to memorize the text of the prayers and of the principal doctrinal formulas, in order that the truths which the child learns to-day may be for him later the compendium of his faith, the prop of his hope, his consolation in suffering, and the invariable rule of all his actions.

Learning the prayers and a part of the catechism by heart is no less necessary from the viewpoint of teaching itself; for these elementary notions constitute the foundation on which the catechist is to build the structure of more extensive knowledge.

Furthermore, these truths are absolute and abstract and, in most cases, the improvising of answers would be exceedingly difficult. Then, too, changes in the text might lead to fatal errors.

On the other hand, of all the mental faculties memory is the first developed, and, as a certain pleasure always attends the satisfaction of a natural tendency, it is not surprising that children like to learn by heart rather than exercise their understanding and their reason.

Yet right here the danger lies; for it is unwise to let the memory act alone. The other faculties must be exercised at the same time. Before assigning a text to be learned by heart, the teacher should carefully explain it, or at least he should make clear its general purport, together with the meaning of the words and the sentences. This explanation must, of course, be adapted to the actual mental development of the pupils. Naturally, texts learned by heart are not so thoroughly apprehended by a child as by an adult; nor is this necessary. But if the work of the child is still partly mechanical, what he entrusts to memory will develop later either through his personal reflections or by means of instruction and reading.

2. Pedagogic Directions.

Above all, overburdening the memory must be shunned; the task must be adapted to the child's capacity. Not only should the program be moderate, but the work of each day should be limited to what is strictly essential. Nothing else so encourages a child to study as the relative shortness and easiness of the lesson; and nothing repels him so much as its length and its difficulty.

Learning by heart should *follow* the lesson, not *precede* it. A catechism answer that has been well explained is already known; a slight effort is sufficient to fix it in memory, and this effort the child makes with pleasure.[a]

The work of learning by heart should, at the very least, be preceded by a summary explanation of the bearing of the lesson, as also of the divisions of the answers, and of the meaning of the words and sentences which the children do not understand:

What is a Christian?

A Christian is one who, | by the grace of God, is *baptized,* | and *believes* | and *professes* the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

This answer is first given by the teacher, since the pupils are presumed not to know it. He recites it deliberately and distinctly, stopping at the places marked. Then he questions:

—How many things are necessary in order to be a Christian?

They are stated one by one:

1. It is necessary to be baptized;
2. It is necessary to believe the doctrine of Jesus Christ;
3. It is necessary to profess it.

TEACHER.—1. You have all been baptized; you know what it means to be baptized, and, therefore, it is not necessary to explain this to you.

2. It is necessary to believe the *doctrine* of Jesus Christ.

The catechist here lays stress on the word italicized.

What is the *doctrine* of Jesus Christ?

PUPIL.—The doctrine of Jesus Christ is all that He has taught us.

[a] See Part II, chap. iii.

T.—We must *believe* and *practise* this doctrine.
3. What, then, does the word *profess* mean?
P.—It means to *practise.*

T.—Therefore, we may say:

A Christian is one who, by the grace of God, is baptized, and believes and practises the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

But let us keep the word *profess,* for it is the best word to use here.

Now let us say the answer again.
—What is a Christian?
All.—A Christian is one who, etc.

The catechist should also teach the children how to learn by heart. The best way to do so is, from time to time, to go through the exercise with them in class. The preceding example may serve as an illustration. Here is another:

What is the Mass?

The Mass is the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood | offered to God, | under the appearances of bread and wine, | in order to represent and continue the sacrifice of the cross.

The teacher asks the question and then gives the answer himself. He utters it slowly once, pausing at the places marked. Then he asks the pupils to count the parts of the answer on their fingers, as he gives it a second time. On this occasion he makes the pauses even more pronounced. Then he questions them as to the number of parts and, if necessary, explains a word here and there in the answer.

Then he continues: "Now, pay attention. I am going to say the first part over again. I want you to say it

after me." He then repeats the first part, and has them repeat it, first in concert, then by separate rows. Finally he calls on two or three pupils separately. In like manner he takes up the second part, then joins it to the first, then goes on to the remaining parts, which he treats in the same way. Last of all, he calls on the pupils to give the entire answer.

Naturally, the number of parts into which the answer should be divided will vary with the age and the grade of the pupils. But in every case the division should be made according to sense, and not according to mere length.

If the answer is very short, it need not be divided at all.

This oral procedure moves rapidly. For very young or for backward pupils it is the only one that is practical. It has another advantage: the answer, coming from the lips of the teacher, especially when uttered with becoming gravity and unction, makes a deeper impression on the children. It effects a twofold result: it teaches them the method to follow in order to study with profit, and it roots deeply in their minds and hearts the ideas that have been made prominent in the exercise.

With children who know how to read, the catechist can put the blackboard to good use. He writes on it first the question and then the answer, marking the principal divisions by vertical lines, as has already been shown. After this he calls first upon a pupil here and there to read a part, and then upon the class as a whole. After he has gone through the separate parts and the entire answer, he rubs out parts of the words one after another, leaving only the initial letters, which he finally erases also.

When the answer is made up of several parallel members, the division may be made clearer by writing out the answer in synoptic form:

Why do you say that God is eternal?

I say that God is eternal because { He always has been, / He never had a beginning, / He never will have an end.

This division appeals to the eye of the mind, as well as to the eye of sense. It makes the order of ideas visible. Now, according to Aristotle, "Order is the very life of memory." [a]

"Repetition is the mother of retention." The catechist should exercise his ingenuity in often recalling to the pupils what they have already learned, especially when the matter is important. The chief means are:

1. In the course of the same instruction, to present things under several different forms, in order that the mind may study them longer and see them more clearly. The most important truths, however, should be treated from time to time regularly every year.

2. At the end of each lesson, to sum up what has been explained.

3. At the beginning of each lesson, to repeat briefly the subject matter of the preceding lesson.

4. Often to review what has been learned; for example, at the end of a chapter or an important section.

5. To connect together or correlate the different parts

[a] For other examples, see Part II, chap. iii, pp. 128, 131.

of the doctrine, dogma, morals, worship, and sacred history, in order to aid both the understanding and the memory not only by association of ideas and by frequent repetition, but also by the variety of viewpoints from which the truths are presented.

PART II.

SPECIAL METHODS.

CHAPTER I.

CATECHISM FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

SUMMARY.

1. Under Six Years of Age. The Mothers' Part; the Part of Lay Catechists. *Prayers:* Program; Method. *Sacred History:* Program. *Catechism:* Deduced from History. Principal Notions.

2. From Six to Eight Years. Division. *Prayers:* Method and Importance. *Sacred History and Catechism:* Method; Oral Teaching. *Preparation for Confession:* Importance; Means.

This chapter joins together the two periods of early childhood, because they resemble each other in many respects. The same principles guide the various educators of children of these ages: parents, teachers, and lay catechists. All have the same end in view; all follow, with some slight differences, the same program, and all make use practically of the same method.

1. Under Six Years of Age.

It has already been stated [1] that the religious education of children should begin early. This sweet and holy ministry belongs, in the first place, to the family, and especially to the mother. Then it also devolves on day nurseries and, if these be lacking, on lay catechists.

[1] See Part I, chap. iv, pp. 43, 44.

It is desirable, as far as possible, to secure volunteer catechists for little children from the members of their own family. An older sister who is already instructed in her religion, an aunt or a cousin, a godmother, or some other friend or relative, may supply the place of a mother who is negligent or who is hindered from performing this duty. By forming these catechists into a parish or city association for the Christian training of children, effective work would be accomplished for restoring the Christian home to its dignity as a sanctuary of faith, piety, and virtue. When these young ladies become mothers in their turn, they will be careful not to neglect toward their own children that sacred duty which they have already fulfilled toward more distant relatives. In this way the family might gradually resume the function which it should never have given up. Blessed be the day when the reign of Christ, once more restored in the home, will make unnecessary the institution of lay catechists whose work is so urgent to-day! This would be, indeed, their most complete and most glorious triumph.

The program of religious instruction for little children comprises prayers, some facts of sacred history, and the most elementary notions of Christian faith and morals.

Prayers.

The first thing to be taught to children is their prayers. What a happiness it is for a mother, or for a pious catechist, to put in the mouth of these dear little ones the formula of perfect praise so pleasing to the ears of the Most High! As soon as possible, then, the real prayers of the Christian should be taught; the sign of the cross, the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, the *Apostles' Creed;* and,

later on, the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. A few short aspirations like, "My Jesus, mercy!" "Sweet Heart of Jesus, be Thou my love!" should also be included.

While teaching these formulas, the mother tries also to explain their meaning and to train the children really to pray. To supply for their lack of intelligence, an act of love and a short prayer in terms like these should be added:

"My God, I love Thee with all my heart. Bless me, bless papa and mamma, bless my brothers and sisters, bless all of us. In the name of the Father," . . .

With all piety, the mother or the catechist says this prayer first, and then the child repeats it with all the fervor of his little heart.

In teaching prayers to very young children, the mother's way is the only one practical. She says a part of the prayer and the child repeats it. In the beginning these fragments are very short, and the child proceeds almost word by word. Gradually, however, the parts are made longer until the child is able to recite the whole prayer by himself.

This process is essentially individual, for the catechist must watch over the exact pronunciation of the words and prevent the child from acquiring defects or bad habits which it would afterwards be difficult to correct. Moreover, it is a fact of experience that the fewer pupils a catechist has, the better he succeeds.

Sacred History.

The program of sacred history as taught at the mother's knee is very limited. It comprises certain familiar narratives and conversations. These are illustrated by pic-

tures of important biblical events, which contain the germ of the fundamental truths of our faith: the creation of the world, the creation of man, the fall of Adam and Eve, their punishment and the promise of a Redeemer; then, in the New Testament, the Annunciation, the Visit of the Blessed Virgin to St. Elizabeth, the Birth of our Lord, the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Magi, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the Finding of Jesus in the Temple, the principal scenes of the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin and her Coronation in heaven.

This program is elastic. It may vary in extent according to the age of the children, their degree of intelligence, etc. With very intelligent or somewhat older children, other facts of the Old and of the New Testament may be taken up: the interesting story of Joseph, the saving of Moses from the Nile, the passage of the Red Sea, the young Tobias and the angel Raphael, the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace, and some miracles of our Lord.

Catechism.

The reason for teaching sacred history is to lay the historic foundation of the principal points of dogma and morals within the grasp of children: the existence of an all-powerful God, creator and ruler of the world; the nature of man composed of an organic body and a spiritual soul; sin and its consequences; heaven and hell; the love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ for us, and devotion to the Most Blessed Virgin. These truths are deduced from sacred history and presented to the children in such a way as to fix them not only in their intelligence and

memory, but also and more particularly in their heart and will.

The good sentiments evoked by the catechism may be intensified by the singing of appropriate hymns characterized by simple melody and genuine piety.

From their tenderest years children should be accustomed to live in the presence of God: "God is a spirit; He is everywhere; He sees all that we do; He knows all our thoughts; we can never hide from His eyes. He loves good and obedient children; He does not love liars, gluttons, idlers, or disobedient children." These primary notions should form the basis of the religious instruction and education of children. They must be laid so solidly in their hearts that they will prove to be an indestructible foundation, on which the edifice of subsequent instruction may be built in all security.

2. From Six to Eight Years.

All that has been said in the preceding article applies here also. Although the religious training of children has been begun, it must be extended and completed. If, on the other hand, it has been neglected, it becomes a duty for the school or the catechism class to supply, as far as possible, for so pitiable an omission.

The parts of the program are the same as for the earlier period: prayers, sacred history, and catechism.

During this period, however, the children begin to go to confession and to receive holy communion. Hence, one of the principal ends of religious instruction at this time of life should be to prepare the children for these important acts and especially for their *first confession* and their *first communion.*

Prayers.

After it is certain that the children know the prayers mentioned above, they should be taught the Act of Contrition and the *I confess;* the Commandments of God and of the Church, a prayer to the Guardian Angel and to their Patron Saint, the prayers before and after meals, and some aspirations suited to nourish piety. The method may be modified according to the number of pupils who follow in the same section.

When all the members of a class learn the same prayer, the catechist recites it first, reverently and distinctly, dividing it into parts, each of which the pupils immediately repeat. These parts are then joined together according to sense and, when so joined, are likewise repeated. Lastly, the catechist says the whole prayer and then has it repeated, always insisting that the sense be perfectly indicated by the pauses.

Repetitions may be individual or collective.

Whenever the teacher has any text committed to memory by his pupils, he ought to proceed in this order, requiring:

1. Individual repetitions by the most intelligent pupils;
2. Concert repetitions by rows or by the whole class;
3. Individual repetitions by the most backward pupils.

If the individual recitations require, in order to be heard by the whole class, that children raise their voices, the teacher must take care that the concert recitations be given in a moderate tone. "The transition from a loud tone to shouting is easy," says Canon Noel; "and between shouting and disorder there is only a step."

When the children do not all study the same prayer,

they should be divided into distinct groups, and monitors from among the best-behaved and most advanced pupils should be appointed to aid the catechist. He need not fear to multiply groups, for the more closely the teaching approaches the individual method, the more efficacious it is and the easier it is also for the monitors. The catechist should, however, always reserve to himself the final testing of the pupils' knowledge.

The prayers may be said to form the principal part of the program of religious instruction. For they contain an admirable summary of Christian doctrine in both dogma and morals. The daily recitation of these sacred formulas, destined, as it is, to be one of the essential practices of a Christian life, should also be the best means of effecting a lasting remembrance of the instructions received in catechism. Hence, the children must study them with care, penetrate their meaning, and fix them indelibly in their memory.

But it is even more important, while teaching the prayers that are recited in class, to inspire the pupils with a love for prayer, to make them really pray, to place their young souls in direct contact with God, and thus enable them to experience the power and the sweetness of this great means of salvation.

Hence, there must never be an instruction in catechism without prayer: prayer at the beginning and at the end, and sometimes also prayer in the course of the lesson. To make certain that the children are not forgetting the principal formulas, it would be well to begin the catechism sometimes with one prayer, sometimes with another. This remark, however, does not apply to the schools conducted

by the Christian Brothers, for these have their consecrated customs,[a] and besides are otherwise guarded against the danger of forgetfulness.

Sacred History and Catechism.

These two branches are here designedly united in one section, because in the lowest grades of school and in the elementary class in catechism the teaching ought to be dominantly historic. Its substance and its spirit have been indicated in the preceding article. The program is extended with the increasing age and mental development of the pupils, but the method remains fundamentally the same.

For each point of doctrine, a story in which it is embodied is selected from the Old or the New Testament. The story is told, and the dogmatic or moral truth to be taught is extracted from it and expressed in a clear and concise formula. This formula is repeated by the children until they have committed it to memory.

It is desirable that these doctrinal formulas be taken from the *text of the catechism which the children are later to study.*[b] To try to fix successfully in the child's memory two formulas in which only a few expressions differ

[a] There the catechism lesson begins with a special prayer. One of the pupils says aloud in the name of all: "O, my God, I am going to hear this catechism attentively for the love of Thee. Grant me grace to learn therein to know, love and serve Thee, and to practice faithfully all that I shall learn." The others answer: "I will continue, O my God, to offer all my actions for the love of Thee. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

[b] Uniformity of definitions constitutes one of the special excellencies of the Christian Brothers' Series of Texts on Christian Doctrine, published by John J. McVey, Philadelphia.

is to introduce useless complications into the work of both teacher and pupil.

Nevertheless, the historic method of teaching catechism is not absolute. Some subjects, indeed, may be treated more profitably in a didactic manner, as, for example, certain notions concerning God: Where is God? Does God see all things? Are there several gods? etc. It is the catechist's business to choose in each case the method that seems preferable to him.

With little children, the method should be entirely oral. A book is not at all necessary for them. The teacher, of course, has a book, not to use in class, but to select matter from, to prepare his lessons from, and to supply the formulas which he is going to teach. Whether he narrates or explains, or whether he strives to fix a text in the child's memory, he should do all orally. This mode of procedure is not only the easiest and pleasantest; it is also the quickest and most profitable.[a]

In this period also the teaching of suitable hymns should be a conspicuous part of the program.

Preparation for Confession.

Children are capable of sin when they have come to the use of reason. From that age they should have within their reach the sovereign remedy provided for them by the charity of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of Penance. Deprived of this help, many of them, if taken away by sudden death, would be exposed to the danger of everlasting damnation. Others would soon find their first faults, so generally the result of impulse and giddiness, quickly

[a] See also our *The Catechist and Little Children,* in preparation.

transformed into baleful habits most difficult to eradicate. Would it not be downright cruelty, says the pious Gerson, "to allow these evil inclinations to grow in the hearts of little children and make no attempt to destroy them?" Not the least noble nor the least holy of the functions of the catechist is to prepare children for confession, and to teach them to have recourse to this divine remedy when they experience its need.

Therefore, he must instruct them carefully in the nature of the sacrament and its parts. He must cultivate in them sentiments of the fear and the love of God as the basis of true motives for contrition. He must give them detailed instruction on the manner of making their confession, and make certain that all of them know the little formulas for the beginning and the end of confession, so that nothing may trouble them when they are performing an action of such importance as this.

From time to time he should make an examination of conscience with them, going over the Commandments of God and of the Church, and pointing out, as he does so, the faults against them which children are likely to commit. At the end of this examination, he should not fail to make a fervent act of contrition, in which he should invite the children to join with their whole heart.

Like the first communion, the first confession has always a special importance; it often exercises a lasting influence over one's whole life. It is, therefore, the catechist's duty to prepare his pupils for their first confession with great care. Long before the time for it has come, he should inspire them with an ardent desire for it as a means of washing away all their sins and easily restor-

ing their souls to perfect purity. He will excite in them sorrow for their sins and help them to take generous resolutions to correct them. He will assist them discreetly in their immediate preparation, and take care to adapt himself to their needs and their capacity. To the most backward he should give special attention. It is the salvation of their souls that is at stake. How, then, can he refuse them in these circumstances which may decide their eternal destiny, all the assistance in his power? The little and the lowly are the objects of the Saviour's most tender solicitude. Let the catechist imitate Him and put no limits to his zeal.

Preparation for Communion.

The decree *Quam singulari* of His Holiness, Pope Pius X, leaves no doubt concerning the age when children should be absolved from their sins and admitted to the Holy Table. What an honor it is for the catechist to prepare for Jesus Christ these living tabernacles in which He is going to dwell! The principal element in this preparation consists of purity of conscience, to be obtained by a good confession. Besides this, the catechist should strive to excite in the hearts of the children sentiments of devotion suited to their age, and especially lively faith in the real presence, ardent love for our Lord, and an intense desire to be united to Him. He should help in every way in his power in the special exercises preparatory for first communion, and after that he should encourage the pupils to form the habit of frequent, and even daily, communion.

CHAPTER II.

CATECHISM AFTER FIRST COMMUNION.

SUMMARY.

General View and Division of the subject.
1. Prayers. Program and Method; the Spirit of Prayer.
2. Sacred History. Purpose; Program.
3. Catechism. Program. Purpose. Division of the Subject for the Following Chapters.

After their first communion, which demands of them only a rudimentary knowledge of religion, the children are obliged to continue their study of it, and, therefore, to assist at the instructions given either by the pastor or by other competent persons under his direction.

It is the correlative duty of parents and all who are charged with the care of children to see that the latter receive such instruction. If they do not give it themselves, they must have it given by others.

The pupils with whom this chapter is concerned may be divided into two groups: those of from eight to ten or eleven years, and those of from eleven to thirteen or fourteen. The program for the former is naturally more limited than that of the latter; but from the viewpoint of pedagogy there is no essential difference in the character of the two courses.

Yet it is true that the younger the children are, the more necessary it is to make use of objective methods; while, if their mental culture has kept pace with their years, the older children will be capable of instruction that

is more doctrinal and analytical. These remarks call for a further consideration, in this chapter, of the teaching of prayers, sacred history, and catechism.

1. Prayers.

Here the program comprises the morning and the evening prayers (as found, for instance, in the Christian Brothers' Uniform Series of Catechisms and the Baltimore Catechism), the *Angelus,* the Commandments of God and of the Church, the Mysteries of the Rosary, and even the Responses at Mass. To these should be added some Aspirations, particularly such as are indulgenced.

The manner of explaining and learning these formulas has already been set forth in this book.[a] At this stage it is possible to lead the children to appreciate something of the inner structure of the prayers and to have them analyze the different parts.

Thus, the *Our Father* comprises:

1. A short preface, or invocation;

2. Three petitions in the form of wishes addressed to God;

3. Four petitions for ourselves;

4. The general conclusion: Amen.

In the *Hail Mary* there are three parts: the words of praise or felicitation spoken by the angel, the words of St. Elizabeth, and the prayer added by the Church.

To make this analysis more striking, the catechist may go to the blackboard and put the parts of the prayer on it in synoptic form, using the bracket diagram:

[a] See Part II, chap. i, pp. 108, 112.

The Lord's Prayer	Invocation	Our Father, who art in heaven.
	Desires addressed to God	1. Hallowed be Thy name; 2. Thy kingdom come; 3. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
	Petitions for Ourselves	1. Give us this day our daily bread; 2. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us; 3. And lead us not into temptation; 4. But deliver us from evil.
	Conclusion	Amen.

In proportion as the children grow up, they should be made to relish prayer and cultivate its practice. Their spiritual wants increase from day to day; more frequent and more violent temptations begin to assail them; virtue demands of them a greater output of energy and, therefore, requires greater assistance from grace. The pious catechist must, therefore, teach his pupils to pray. But it is more by example than by precept that he must teach them to bathe frequently in this sacred pool, whence they will come forth filled with new vigor and strengthened with a divine power to resist all their enemies.

The advice already given in this book [a] to lay catechists holds good here. Since they cannot watch over the morning and evening saying of the daily prayers by their pupils, let them vary the prayers to be said at the beginning of catechism, choosing in preference the common formulas, which are likewise those most steeped in doctrine: the *Our Father,* the *Hail Mary,* the *Apostles' Creed,* and the *Commandments of God and of the Church.*[b]

[a] See p. 112.

[b] Canon Cappliez adds to this list the definitions of the three principal mysteries and of the seven sacraments which in certain dioceses it is customary to incorporate with the prayers.

But to transmute these formulas into acts and to give them the character and the efficacy of real prayer, it would be well to insert some words either before them or after them, as St. John Baptist de la Salle did in his schools in teaching the principal mysteries of faith.[a]

DEFINITION OF THE MYSTERIES.—*At the beginning:* I believe, O my God, that.... (Definition of the mystery of the Holy Trinity).

I believe that the mystery of the Incarnation is....

I believe that the mystery of the Redemption is....

At the end: And in this belief I adore and love Thee with all my heart.[1]

DEFINITION OF THE SACRAMENTS.—I believe, O my God, that Baptism is a sacrament....

I believe that Confirmation is a sacrament....

At the end: I thank Thee, O my God, for having instituted seven admirable sacraments for the welfare of our souls and of Thy Church, and I beseech Thee to grant to all Christians the grace always to receive the sacraments worthily and profitably.

THE COMMANDMENTS.—These may be recited in two choirs, which at the end unite in saying:

O my God, I most humbly beg pardon for all the sins that I have committed against Thy divine commandments. I firmly resolve, with the help of Thy Grace, to keep them more faithfully for the time to come.

When a prayer, like the ten commandments or the beads, is recited in two choirs, the side that begins should from time to time be changed, so that every child may have a chance to recite both parts.

[a] See *Exercises of Piety,* La Salle Bureau, New York, pp. 10-13.

Here, too, the teacher must bear in mind that the more backward and the more defective children may be mentally, the more time must relatively be given to teaching them their prayers, since, as has already been seen,[a] these pious formulas contain the substance of all that a Christian must know to be saved.

2. Sacred History.[1]

In the lower grades, sacred history, or at least Bible history, is considered the basis of catechetic teaching, since it contains concrete manifestations of the truths which the catechist is to explain after deriving them from the historical narrative. In higher grades, sacred history should be taught in a less fragmentary manner, for it should reveal to the pupils the succession of divine events and their consequences. In other words, it should manifest God's work in creating and governing the world and in redeeming mankind through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, too, the program should be more or less extensive and detailed, according to the age and attainments of the pupils. The most important parts of the Old Testament are the first epochs up to the entrance of the Hebrews into the Promised Land, and some of the principal prophesies; in the New Testament, the hidden life of our Lord, the special traits of His public life, His passion and His resurrection.

Among the miracles those should be chosen which most strikingly manifest His divinity, those which He Himself

[a] See p. 109.

[1] Consult *Syllabus in Religion* for Schools of Archdiocese of New York, pp. 19-36.

indicated as infallible signs of His divine nature and of His mission as Teacher and Saviour of men.

The solemn rites of the Church embody the history of our Lord's life in a rather short period from Christmas to Easter. It is during these ecclesiastical seasons that it is best to study the New Testament. Moreover, it is wise to plan one's course in such a way as to be regularly a little in advance of the liturgic feasts. If the time had been wanting to take up previously the leading facts of the Old Testament, included in the program, it would be better to postpone the consideration of them to the summer quarter.

In the last years of the grammar school, the course should be made so complete as to include all the principal events of the Old and of the New Testament. To these should be added some of the leading facts of Church History which offer new and convincing proof of the divinity of our Saviour in the fulfillment of His prophecies and His promises to the apostles.

3. Catechism.

In the middle, as in the higher, grades of grammar school, the teaching of religion is closely connected with the text of the catechism. Indeed, the text itself determines the program. Since this program should be covered in its entirety once in the school year, it must be limited to what is essential. If too great a burden were to be put on the memory, other phases, equally important for the formation of the children, would be neglected. In general, it may be said that in the course of religious instruction prepared by the Brothers of the Christian Schools,

the Catechism No. 1 will suffice for the first three grades, Catechism No. 2 for the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, and Catechism No. 3 for the seventh and eighth grades.

But, as has already been hinted, the catechist must not lose sight of the multiple ends of his teaching. To all the child's faculties, to the heart and the will, as well as to the intellect and the memory, must he bring daily nutriment. Hence, to give him genuine knowledge of the catechism, to strengthen his convictions by arguments suited to his age, to make him relish the divine truths, to develop, by exercises, faith, charity, and the other Christian virtues—this is the goal for which the catechist should strive in every instruction, as well as in the general plan of the course.

Hence, every one of his instructions should comprise:

1. A detailed explanation of the text;
2. A clear and convincing demonstration of the truths;
3. The application of these truths to the moral conduct of the pupils.

These three elements touch upon the most arduous part of the catechist's work. In consequence of its importance, each is the subject of a separate chapter, although, in practice, the three are often inseparably united.

CHAPTER III.

EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT.

SUMMARY.

Two Kinds of Textual Explanation. Division of the Chapter.

1. Explanation of Words. Three Kinds of Word to Explain: Words of Many Meanings, Technical Terms, Figurative Expressions. How to Explain them.

2. Explanation of Things and of Ideas. Title of the Chapter; Questions; Answers. Analysis of Answers by means of Synoptic Tables and Bracket-Diagrams. Mysteries.

There are two kinds of explanation which the catechist may give of the text.

The first is primarily literal. It follows the text word for word, and aims to set forth the meaning of the words and the sentences as they are met by the pupil. It seeks to determine the precise meaning to attach to each answer. This is the minimum of explanation required before the pupils learn the lesson by heart.

It may be well to note that often it is the terms employed and the construction of the sentences that make the catechism obscure for children, rather than the ideas themselves. Hence, the recommendation of Bossuet: "Begin the lesson with a short, familiar, affectionate, and insinuating conversation on the subject treated. This will simplify the work of explanation."

The second kind of explanation goes more deeply into things. The teacher now profits by the text to give to the

doctrine all the development which the pupils are able to assimilate. It is this kind of elucidation that will now engage our attention.

Naturally, the explanation of words must come first, as this is a necessary prelude to the explanation of things, ideas, and definitions.

1. Explanation of Words.

There are in the catechism many words that call for no explanation, not only because they are well understood by the pupils, but also because they are used in a familiar sense.

The words that really demand explanation are of three kinds:

1. Words of many meanings, ambiguous words;
2. Technical and scientific terms;
3. Figurative expressions.

Words of Many Meanings.—The word *heaven,* for example, may designate either the firmament or the abode of the blessed. As both meanings are familiar to children, it is sufficient to point out to them in which of the two senses the given term is used.

The word *church* may signify the building to which we go to offer up our prayers, or the society of all the faithful, or a part of that society. Here it is necessary to explain these different meanings, to make the children distinguish them, and then to point out which is employed in the passage under consideration.

For example, take the saying: "Out of the Church, there is no salvation." While this or its equivalent is very clear to an instructed Catholic, it may present great difficulty to

children. When they hear the word *church,* they naturally think first of the building, the most material and concrete of the objects that may be expressed by the term.

Technical Terms.—These are very numerous in the catechism, and, for the most part, they are unavoidable. Open at random a catechism whose compilers have striven for simplicity of expression. You may find something like this: "Our Lord *instituted* the *Holy Eucharist* under the *species* of bread and wine to show us that in *communion* He wished to be the food of our souls, as bread and wine are food for the body."

Four technical terms in one answer! Had the author of the book looked for elegance of expression, he might have written *nourishment* instead of *food,* and then there would be five technical terms!

Take another example: "Prayer is an *elevation* of the soul to God to *render* Him our *homage,* to *manifest* our *wants,* and to ask His *grace.*" Here there six words calling for explanation of their precise meaning, and that in one of the ordinary definitions!

Again, many words appear simple to the catechist which are really difficult and complicated for children. What these are he must learn by observation and experience. Once he knows them, he should carefully avoid using them in his instructions. If he meets them in the text, he should explain them.

How are the words to be explained?

1. By analyzing them, if their elements are already known, and each of these elements is taken in a sense that is natural and familiar to the children.

2. By laying stress on a more common word of the same family, particularly by going from the abstract noun to the corresponding verb or adjective. What is a holy day of *obligation?* It is a feast that we are *obliged* to keep. The word *obligation* is difficult, but *obliged* is common.

Since the explanation of a word in catechism does not, properly speaking, mean a definition, least of all a technical definition, there need be no hesitation about introducing into this seeming definition the term to be defined, provided it is then used in a form that is better known.

In like manner, to explain the word *confirmation,* one may turn to analogous terms that are less technical.

TEACHER.—Write the word confirmation on the blackboard.	**Confirmation.**
T.—What verb corresponds to it?	**Confirm.**
PUPIL.—The verb to *confirm.*	**Affirm.**
T.—Very good. Place it under *confirmation.*	**Make firm.**

T.—Now find me another verb having almost the same sense.

P.—*Affirm.*

T.—Write it down also. What does it mean?

P.—It means to make a *statement as firm* or *certain.*

T.—Write under it *make firm.*

Then the teacher goes back to the word *confirm,* and then to *confirmation.*

3. By substituting for it another word with the same meaning. For example: Penance is a sacrament instituted by Christ for the remission of sins committed after baptism. In place of *remission* use *forgiveness,* which is much simpler and has the same meaning. The answer will then be clear.

FIGURATIVE EXPRESSIONS.—In addressing his pupils, the catechist should avoid such terms; but he will often come upon them in the texts from the Bible which the Church has inserted in her Office. Our Lord said to His Apostles: "You are the *salt* of the earth." St. John the Baptist called Jesus the *Lamb of God.* These are expressions that children should be made to understand. This may be done by considering the literal meaning first, and then, by sub-questions, bringing out the comparisons involved. For example:

T.—What did St. John the Baptist call our Lord?
P.—He called Him the *Lamb of God.*
T.—Now, what was our Lord really?
P.—Our Lord was the Son of God made man.
T.—Why, then, did St. John call Him a lamb? (Silence....)
—Just think for a moment.
—What did Abel offer to God?
—What did the Hebrews sometimes do with lambs?
—What did they ask of God by this sacrifice?
—Did the lamb complain? Did the lamb defend itself when they wanted to sacrifice it?
—To whom was our Lord offered in sacrifice?
—Why was He offered in sacrifice?
—How did He allow Himself to be sacrificed?
—For whom did He pray on the cross?
—Now, then, why did St. John call our Lord the *Lamb of God?*

2. Explanation of Things and Ideas.

The text of the catechism consists of the *titles* of the successive chapters with the *questions* and *answers* that follow the title. Undoubtedly, the *answers* constitute the part that demands most explanation; yet the other two parts—viz.: the titles and questions, should not be neglected.

The Title of the Chapter.—When the catechist is about to begin the explanation of a new chapter, the pupils might open their books and read its title aloud. If the title is complex, it may be analyzed in such a way as to indicate the principal divisions of the lesson just beginning.

The titles of the preceding chapters might also be called for, with a view to show the sequence and the connection of the lessons.

If, however, the pupils have no books, the teacher himself announces the title, and either writes it on the blackboard, with its principal divisions, or has one of the pupils to do so.

Questions.—Before explaining the answer, it may often be wise to spend a few moments on the question; for it frequently happens that pupils confuse the questions and, from want of reflection on the meaning of the question actually given them, make answers that are entirely irrelevant.

Besides, the task is very easy, for often two or three sub-questions are entirely sufficient.

—Who or what is asked about in this question?
—What is asked?

If several questions in the book are nearly alike, questions like the following might be put to the pupils:

—What question like this have we met before?
—In what ways do the two questions differ?
—What was asked in the first? With what topic was it connected?
—What is asked in this? etc.

ANSWERS.—The explanation of an answer, or the development of the idea which it embodies, is often confused with an explanation of the terms in which it is expressed.

To explain an abstract notion, it is well to start with ideas that are already familiar and to make as much use as possible of sensile and objective means: concrete examples, comparisons, stories, etc.

A complex notion should first be resolved into its constituent elements. Here the blackboard should be used, as has been pointed out in the section on learning by heart.[a] A graphic arrangement of the parts of the answer, by means of the bracket diagram or a like device, will often not only suffice to make this division clear, but also help to an understanding of its meaning and fix it securely in the memory.

When is a sin mortal?

A sin is mortal when it breaks the law of God { in a serious matter and with full consent.

What effect did the disobedience of our first parents produce?

In punishment of their disobedience Adam and Eve {
- were driven from the terrestrial paradise and condemned to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow;
- became subject { to ignorance, to concupiscence, to suffering, to death,
- and were deprived of grace and the happiness of heaven.

It is preferable to have this analysis written on the blackboard by one of the more intelligent pupils. The catechist should direct him by Socratic questions.

Then the teacher has the backward pupils read this black-

[a] Part I, chap. x, p. 99.

board analysis, at first section by section, and then in its entirety. While this is in progress the necessary explanations are introduced.

When the lesson is on the mysteries, the explanation given cannot, of course, enable the pupils to comprehend the mysteries as such; it is limited to making them understand just what the Church teaches as of faith. With young children, technical explanations are out of place. It is loss of time to attempt with them an exposition of the generation of the Word of God, or the procession of the Holy Ghost, or any other revealed mystery.

Moreover, comparisons should here be used with great moderation, lest they help to produce too sensuous and gross a conception of a mystery, and, therefore, to misrepresent it. The reason for believing a mystery is not our greater or less comprehension of it, but the Word of God, who has revealed it, and the teaching of the Church, who, through the assistance of the Holy Ghost, is infallible in her doctrine.

CHAPTER IV.

DEVELOPMENT OF A DEFINITION.

SUMMARY.

1. Synthetic Method. Example: Faith.
2. Analytic Method. Example: A Sacrament.
3. Which Method Should be Preferred? Different Cases. New Example of Synthetic Method Applied to Division of Ideas: Mortal Sin and Venial Sin.

To develop a definition, the catechist may choose between the analytic method and the synthetic method. Let us consider the second.

1. The Synthetic Method.

The first thing to do is to examine the facts which constitute the basis of the doctrine, or which the definition either recalls or implies. These are placed in their natural or chronological order. The exposition is thus transformed into a kind of rapid, concise historic narrative, which terminates in the definition.

Take, for example, the definition of Faith.

What is Faith?

Faith is a supernatural virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths which God has revealed.

What is the order of facts or events?

1. Man, though destined to see God in heaven, could not of himself know all the truths necessary for his salvation.

2. In His infinite goodness, God deigned to *reveal* them to him—*i. e.*, He made them known to him in an extraordinary or supernatural manner.

3. God did not speak to every man, but only to chosen men, the Prophets and the Apostles; and He commanded His Church to teach us all that He had revealed.

4. We are obliged to believe firmly all the truths which God has revealed.

5. In believing them, we accomplish a duty, we practise a virtue.

6. Since these truths lie beyond the reach of reason, we need God's help to believe them.

7. He really helps us and plants in our hearts a virtue which moves us to believe these truths.

8. As this virtue has grace for its source and moves us to believe truths which are above and beyond reason, it is said to be *supernatural.*

9. Lastly, this virtue by which we believe all the truths which God has revealed is called *Faith.*

—Now: What is Faith?

10. *Faith is a supernatural virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths which God has revealed.*

After setting forth this series of facts, the catechist interrogates the children and, by his questions, leads them to repeat the facts in the same order.

1. For what is man destined after this life? Can man of himself know all the truths necessary for salvation?

2. Who has revealed them to him? What does the word *reveal* mean?

3. Has God revealed these truths to each one of us? To you? To whom did God reveal them? Who spoke to the Prophets? Who spoke to the Apostles? Whom has God ordered to teach them to us?

4. Since God has been good enough to reveal these truths to us, what are we bound to do? How should we believe them?

5. What name do we give to the acts that we perform in fulfilling a duty?—and to the habit of repeating these acts? What do we do when we believe the truths revealed by God?

6. Can we practise this virtue of ourselves? Why can we not do so?

7. What does God do to help us?

8. What name do we give to a virtue that has grace for its principle?

9. What name do we give to the supernatural virtue by which we firmly believe all the truths which God has revealed to us and which He teaches us through His Church?

10. What is Faith? Repeat, James, and you, George. Let us all repeat it together. Say it once more, Thomas, Martin.

Then, to secure greater clearness and precision, the teacher may take up the question again and interrogate in an inverse order, proceeding analytically in this way:

—What is a virtue?

—Why do we say that Faith is a virtue?

—What kind of virtue is Faith?

—Why is Faith a supernatural virtue?

—What sort of good act does it enable us to perform?

—How should we believe these truths?

—What does the word *firmly* mean?

—How should we believe truths?

—Why should we believe all of them? Why should we believe them firmly?

—Why is it that God cannot be deceived, nor deceive us?

—To whom did God reveal these truths?

—Who teaches them to us in the name of God?

—Who helps us to believe all these truths? How?

—Let us once more answer the question: What is Faith?

It would also be eminently practical and highly profitable to take up again the analysis of the definition of faith and apply it to the formula of the act of faith. The catechist might proceed in this fashion:

We are now going to change the definition into a prayer. I will say it first, and then you may all repeat it together after me.

The teacher then says distinctly and reverently:

O my God, I firmly believe that Thou art one God in three divine persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; I believe that Thy Divine Son became man, and died for our sins, and that He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths which the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived.

T.—Repeat this prayer.

—Let us all say it together once more with all the reverence possible.

T.—In this prayer, as in the definition, we state three things:

1. What we believe.
2. Why we believe.
3. How we believe.

Here a new series of questions may be given, calling for a repetition and a development of these ideas. Then:

T.—When we recite this prayer, what virtue do we practise?

P.—We practise the virtue of Faith.

T.—Yes, we make an act of the virtue of Faith. For that reason, what do we call this prayer?

P.—We call it an *act of Faith.*

T.—Very good; but to make it really *an act of Faith*, it is not sufficient to pronounce it with the lips. We must put *our whole heart* into it.

With older children, with those who are in perseverance classes, for instance, the doctrine may be more fully developed and also cast into a more didactic form by the employment of theological terms. For example, we may say:

1. What we believe is called the *object* of faith.
2. Why we believe is the *motive* of our faith.

3. How we believe includes the *qualities* of our faith.

The *object* of faith, the *motive* of faith, and the *qualities* of faith are found in both the definition and the act of faith. These three elements, when taken together, tell us what faith is—that is, they make known to us the *nature* of faith.

2. The Analytic Method.

When the analytic method is followed, the order of procedure is reversed. The definition is first divided into its principal parts, and these are studied one after another, and in the order in which they are actually found in the definition. For example:

—What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign | instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ | to signify and to produce grace.

The teacher first states this definition very slowly and very distinctly, indicating by a pause the end of each of the parts; then he shows the divisions more clearly, either directly, by way of exposition, or indirectly, by means of questions.

Three things are necessary to make a sacrament: for a sacrament must be:

1. An outward sign;
2. Instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ;
3. Capable of signifying and producing grace.

The teacher calls for a repetition of this division and then proceeds to explain each of the parts. In each case he explains the words and the ideas.

I. What does the word *sacrament* mean?

—When is anything a sign?

—What does the word *outward* mean?

—What is meant by an outward sign?
—Give some examples.
—Of what is smoke a sign?
—By what senses can we perceive smoke?
—Of what is speech a sign?
—What sense perceives it?

II. Why do we say that a sacrament is a *sign?*
—Of what is a sacrament a sign?
—Why do we call it an *outward* sign?
—How many parts are there to the sign in a sacrament?
—What is the first? What is the second?
—What sense perceives the action?
—What sense perceives the words? etc.

In order the better to bring out the difference between the two methods, the same matter may now be treated synthetically.

1. My dear boys, God wishes all men to be saved, and to help them to be saved He sent down to earth His dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. We cannot be saved without God's grace. It is grace that makes us holy, and Jesus Christ has merited for us all the graces necessary for salvation.

3. But grace is invisible. We cannot, therefore, know positively when we have it or when we receive it.

4. Yet our Lord has been good enough to give us some marks, at least, for the principal graces. For this purpose He attached them to special ceremonies which He established in the Church.

5. These ceremonies give us grace, and at the same time signify it; they make known to us what kind of grace we receive. They are, therefore, signs that produce and represent grace.

6. In each of these signs or ceremonies there is a material element or an action that we see with our eyes, and there are words that we hear with our ears; as, for example, in baptism. Our eyes and our ears are sense-organs; hence, the

sign of grace is sensible, and is, therefore, called an *outward sign*, a *sensible sign*.

7. In the last place, these outward signs, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ to signify and to produce grace, are called *sacraments*.

—Therefore: What is a sacrament?

8. *A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ to signify and to produce grace.*

3. Which Method is to be Preferred?

To take a piece of mechanism apart requires less skill and attention than to put it together. At first glance, therefore, the analytic method would seem to be easier than the synthetic. It demands a less notable effort on the part of the catechist; for, while the synthetic method makes it imperative that he never lose sight of the essential points and that he classify them according to a rigorous plan, the analytic method is ordinarily limited to following the text, observing the points already noted—viz.:

1. The division of the definition into its principal members;

2. The explanation of the words in each member, followed by an explanation of things—that is, of forms of expression, clauses, and propositions.

This work is often done by the catechism text, which, after giving the definition, proceeds to explain its different parts.

But, although the synthetic method seems more difficult, it is, in many cases, more natural, more interesting, and even more intuitive, since it is so closely connected with historical narrative.

Be it also noted that the definition itself results from a synthesis; it is the product of the mind's work upon a

given subject. It is the fruit ready to be plucked, but the fruit is the last step in the development of the plant. So the definition, instead of being found at the beginning of a treatise, might rather serve as its conclusion. Authors of didactic works deliberately reverse this order. It remains for the teacher to restore it in his lessons.

As often as the definition allows it; in other words, whenever the definition is predominantly descriptive or based on a series of facts that can be called to mind, the synthetic method should be preferred.

It is also available when the aim is to set forth a division or classification of ideas. Here is an example:

Take the division of sin into *mortal* sin and *venial* sin. The catechist might proceed in this manner:

1. My dear children, every offense against God is a very great evil. For God is infinitely holy and has the greatest horror for every sin.

2. Yet all sins do not give equal offense to God. There are some, indeed, into which man finds himself drawn without thinking, through weakness, and which he regrets almost immediately.

3. On other occasions, man may know very well that he is doing wrong. Then his will is evil. We might say that he takes pleasure in doing wrong.

4. We must also consider the matter of sin. To steal a nickel, for instance, is not so bad as to steal a hundred dollars. To tell a white lie is not so bad as to swear falsely.

5. God sees all these sins. He knows also how they differ from one another, because nothing is hidden from Him. He knows all things. He looks down with pity on the men or the children who fall through weakness and who commit only slight sins; and He is ready to pardon them if they repent.

6. Such sins are called *venial sins*, because God forgives them more easily than He does greater sins. The word *venial*

means *forgivable.* Venials sins do not cut us off entirely from God; they do not make us lose either His grace or heaven.

7. But when a man sins through malice and commits a grievous sin, God has such a horror of it that He cannot endure the man, but cuts him off from Him. This man is then dead in God's eyes, and, unless he repents, will go to hell, where he will remain far away from God and be condemned to everlasting death. This is why this sin is called *mortal sin.*

8. You see, then, my dear children, that there are two kinds of sin: *venial* sin and *mortal* sin.

Questions are then asked, following the order used in giving the exposition. When the analytic method is employed, it is well to follow the sequence of the text-book. In that case, the questions might be given in this order:

—How many kinds of sin are there?
—When is a sin mortal?
—What is meant by grievous matter?
—What is full consent of the will? etc.

It is when one is about to explain a definition for the first time that the question of method is important. If, later on, it is advisable to go back and treat the subject more fully, there is not the same reason for being preoccupied with the method to be used. When the idea has been formed by the application of the synthetic method, it is, of course, commendable to review it and develop it by the analytic method.

To sum up: If we look to the principal characteristic of the three methods of exposition, the historic, the synthetic, and the analytic, we may say that the *historic* method is particularly suitable in teaching the very young and the ignorant; the *synthetic* method is better adapted to children who are more advanced and to persons who already

possess some knowledge of the principles of our holy religion; while the *analytic* method will be found helpful in perseverance classes and to persons of relatively advanced instruction.

CHAPTER V.

DEMONSTRATION.

SUMMARY.

1. Nature of Demonstration. Mode of Procedure. Nature of Faith; Its Foundation. Principal Arguments. Truths of the Natural Order.

2. Refutation of Objections. Caution against Raising Them. Clear Exposition of Christian Doctrine; Danger of Religious Discussions. Development of Heart.

1. Nature of Demonstration. Mode of Procedure.

Demonstration of the truths of Catholic faith is rarely the task of the lay catechist, at least in the sense in which the word *demonstration* is used here. The mysteries of revelation, for instance, are not demonstrated as are the truths of the natural order. By their very nature the revealed mysteries are above and beyond reason, which, therefore, ought humbly to submit to them. For Christians faith in mysteries is pre-eminently an act of obedience.

To realize the function of what we may call demonstration in the teaching of religion, it is indispensable to keep in view the essential character of faith as a supernatural virtue. Faith is a gift of God, a product of His Grace and His word. It is produced in the souls of the just by the direct action of the Holy Ghost. He also preserves and increases it in such souls as are sufficiently prepared. Their preparation consists in remaining faithful in God's service according to the light of conscience and in keep-

ing purity of heart. *Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*[1]

Let us not forget that, since faith is a virtue supernatural in its principle, supernatural in its preservation, and supernatural in its increase, it is especially by supernatural means that we are to cherish and strengthen it in ourselves and others. These means are chiefly a good life and prayer: "Lord, increase our faith."[2] It is of much greater importance to foster faith than to attempt to prop it up. Be animated yourself with a lively faith, affirm boldly the truths revealed by God. In a word, live up to your faith, let it shine forth in all your conduct. This will be the best, the most efficacious demonstration that you can give of our holy religion.

Hence, in addressing baptized Catholics, your aim in demonstrating truth is rather to feed their faith than to protect it. Be on your guard against acting as if everything relating to their faith had to be built, as it were, from the ground up. This would be a serious error in tactics, against which the Vatican Council sounded a warning in its third session.

Undoubtedly it is your duty to forewarn your pupils, whether children or youth, against the attacks to which their faith will certainly be exposed. Therefore must you equip them with solid arguments in keeping with the development of their minds. But bear in mind that these arguments are rather exterior walls of defense against attacks from without than the solid basis of their own belief.

The real foundation of faith is the revelation of God

[1] Matt. v, 8. [2] Luke xvii, 5.

and the infallible teaching of the Church. Try, then, to place these two facts in the clearest light, dwelling, whenever the occasion presents itself, on the intercourse of God with men down through the ages and narrating with special detail the life and the doctrine of the Son of God made man.

Among His teachings, lay emphasis on the order given, on the one hand, to the Apostles to teach all nations and, on the other, to the people to believe their doctrine;[1] on the promise of His perpetual assistnace to the Church,[2] as also of the coming of the Holy Ghost and of His workings in the Church;[3] on the realization of this promise in the mystery of Whitsunday and in the miraculous spread of the gospel; and, lastly, on the institution of the hierarchy of the Church, on the primacy of St. Peter and his successors, and on the promise made to them personally of indefectibility in the faith.[4]

The principal arguments should be taken from Holy Scripture and always cited with great respect. The texts should be few in number, but well chosen; clear in meaning, taken in their literal sense, and interpreted according to the mind of the Fathers of the Church.

The decisions of councils and the definitions of Popes may likewise be cited, but in a spirit of submission to the authority of the Church. These proofs also belong to the order of faith, since they are based on the supernatural fact of the infallibility of the Church. Moreover, like texts from Scripture, they nourish our faith while they give firm support to the truth.

[1] Mark xvi, 15, 16. [2] Matt. xxviii, 20. [3] John xv, 26; xvi, 7, 13. [4] Matt. xvi, 18, 19; Luke xxii, 32; John xxi, 15-17.

In religion there are some truths that belong at one and the same time to the domain of reason and to that of revelation. They are commonly called the preliminaries or the preambles of faith. Such, for example, are the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the necessity of a sanction after this life is over, etc. When treating of these fundamental dogmas, join some proofs from reason to those supplied by revelation. But you must exercise great discretion, and take due account of the age and the capacity of your pupils. What value would a proof *from reason* have for children if their untrained minds were unable to grasp its meaning?

Take care lest, while aiming to strengthen their faith, you weaken its foundation. When announcing a proof, never make use of an expression that would even appear to insinuate that the truth in question needs to be demonstrated. For example, never say: "I am going to prove such a thing to you." Such a procedure would sow doubt in the hearts of your pupils. Never attempt to demonstrate to them that there is a God. They have not the shadow of a doubt about His existence. The argument given in most catechisms is peremptory in its demand for assent: "A clock does not make itself, a house does not build itself; how, then, could the world make itself?

Even when you explain these proofs with greater detail to more advanced pupils, do not act as if you were trying to convince them or as if they were in need of these arguments to support their faith. On the contrary, aim simply to show them how blind and inexcusable those persons are who refuse to accept truths so easily demonstrable by reason.

2. Refutation of Objections.

How should the catechist act with regard to objections against religion?

Evidently, the first rule is not to provoke them imprudently. Under pretext of answering it, the catechist sometimes formulates a difficulty, without perceiving that his answer, being abstract and subtile, is beyond the grasp of his hearers, who are not prepared for such distinctions. What, then, remains of that beautiful demonstration? Nothing but a doubt in the minds of those that heard it.

Knowing the objections that are most common in the class of society to which your pupils belong, *explain with the greatest possible clearness the doctrines which these objections attack, but without assuming the air of one who is fighting an adversary.* In this way the difficulties are dissipated before they have even been formally proposed. If the pupils have already heard the objection, they now know its refutation; if they hear it later, it will find no lodgment in their minds, its place being taken by the opposite truth. For, since Catholic doctrine is the highest expression of truth, objections against it can come from only those persons who have not given it serious study. When the sun rises, immediately, without other means, the darkness is dissipated. So is it also with the truth. Strive, then, to make it shine forth in all its splendor; the mists of error cannot resist its power.

This was the method of St. Francis de Sales. In his sermons, as well as in his conferences with Protestants, he explained the truths of faith with the luminous simplicity that was so natural to him. His method was crowned with marvelous success. Protestants thronged to

his sermons and instructions. They were astonished to hear him cite, in proof of Catholic truth, the very texts of Scripture which their own ministers were using to refute it; but the holy bishop took good care to conceal from them the artifice to which he had recourse and to dissemble the air of one facing an adversary. Numerous conversions ordinarily followed his preaching.

Even among adult Catholics discussions on religious topics are not free from danger. Objections are often couched in such brilliant language as to dazzle those that hear them and blind them to the weakness of the attack. St. Gregory Nazianzen relates that Julian the Apostate began his opposition to the true faith by defending the pagan side of certain religious questions in disputes or controversial exercises with his brother Gallus. Commenting on this trait, Cardinal Newman says: "Probably he [Julian] would not have been able himself to assign the point of time at which he ceased merely to take a part, and became earnest in his unbelief." [1]

In concluding this section, it is well to recognize this truth: it is from the heart of the young man rather than from his head that the greatest peril to his faith can come. Enemies from without are to be dreaded only when they have the secret instincts of his heart as accomplices. No one begins to doubt of God until it becomes his interest that no God should exist. "If," says Leibnitz, "geometry were as much opposed as moral science to our interests and our passions, we would doubt it and contradict it no less than we do the latter, in spite of the most evident demonstrations."

[1] *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, p. 33.

François Coppée has said: "If they were sincere, many men would admit that what first alienated them from religion was the severe rule which it imposes on all as to the use of the senses, and that it was only later that they sought from reason and science metaphysical arguments to sanction freedom from restraint." [1]

Therefore, make your pupils thoroughly virtuous young men and young women. They will then not only remain firm in the faith themselves, but they will give to the world the most convincing apology of our holy religion, the irresistible argument of a life that is spotless and above reproach.

[1] *La bonne souffrance*, p. 6.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MORAL APPLICATION.

SUMMARY.

Necessity of the Moral Application. Division of the Subject.

1. Sentiments to Elicit. Which they are; Means.

2. Practical Resolutions. Necessity, Means.

3. Motives of Action. Importance, Kinds, Practical Directions.

The word of God is fruitful of itself; it is *living and effectual, . . . reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*[1] Hence, there is always ground for hoping that after the truth has enlightened the mind, it will sow in the heart seeds which will germinate and put forth the blossoms of good sentiments and the fruits of generous deeds.

But this development the catechist must aid. Besides, if he coöperates with the Holy Ghost in enlightening the minds of his pupils, should he not also collaborate with Him in exciting their hearts and moving their wills? Religious teaching should, therefore, be practical: to light it should add heat and action; to faith it should join charity and the works which are its product and its expression.[2]

This chapter will treat successively of:

1. The sentiments to elicit in children;
2. Practical resolutions for them to make;
3. The motives of their actions.

[1] Heb. iv, 12. [2] James ii, 18.

1. Sentiments to Elicit.

In children, feeling or sentiment is manifest before intelligence, and through it particularly must the will be reached. It even reacts on the understanding and the reason, which it elevates or perverts. Hence, the importance of cultivating in children love of virtue and horror of vice, fear of punishment, hope of an everlasting reward, and, above all, love of God, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Blessed Mother. Innocent young souls are more accessible to love than to fear.

The first means of inspiring these sentiments in others is to be filled with them one's self. Then zeal and love for children will dictate to the catechist short but fervent sentences, which will find their way straight to the heart: "Oh, what a dreadful thing sin is! How can we offend a God who loves us so much! Oh, how happy we shall be in heaven, seeing God, loving Him, and praising Him for all eternity! Let us try to merit this happiness! What a kind mother the Blessed Virgin is! How can we help loving her most tenderly?"

Sometimes the catechist may express the sentiment by means of an ejaculatory prayer, which he first recites and then has the pupils repeat after him. At other times, as has already been suggested, he transforms into a prayer a truth or a definition which he has just explained. In this way he makes it an act of faith, of adoration, or of love: "My Saviour Jesus, I believe that Thou art really present in the most holy sacrament of the altar, and I adore Thee with all my heart."

These acts may likewise be evoked from the children by means of questions. Thus, after explaining a truth,

the catechist, in place of asking: What do you know of this truth? should rather ask: What do you believe of this truth? Let him insist upon the complete answer. The child will then reply: "*I believe* such or such a truth." Coming from his lips, the words *I believe* already constitute an act of faith.

After the example of his divine Master, it is well for the catechist often to condense a doctrine into a brief maxim. This, becoming fixed in the memory, will be a light for the understanding and will also influence both heart and will. Moreover, when taken from Holy Scripture, these maxims have the supernatural efficacy that belongs to the word of God: "No man can serve two masters." "He that exalteth himself shall be humbled." "Ask, and you shall receive." "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

2. Practical Resolutions.

Good sentiments are like beautiful flowers that soon fade; they leave nothing behind them unless they are bedewed with divine grace and transformed into saving fruits —that is, into deeds and habits of virtue. This practical side of his teaching the catechist should never lose sight of; to realize it, he should observe the following points:

1. Draw some rules of conduct from every truth taught. Do not be content with general formulas. Go into its details; point out clearly to the children in what circumstances they should guard against this fault or practice that virtue. Tell them what dangers to avoid what evil inclinations to combat, what obstacles to overcome, and what means to employ.

2. Do not propose a great number of resolutions at one time: one or two will suffice, but let them be chosen with prudence and apply to essential points. Often revert to the practices necessary for salvation, and insist strongly on their use. Strengthen the will against difficulty and discouragement.

3. These resolutions should be adapted to the present needs of the pupils, to the circumstances in which they are actually placed. It is by the sincere practice of acts of virtue that the will is strengthened, and that good habits are formed in the soul. Resolutions that have to do with a distant future will be forgotten long before the occasion arises for putting them into practice.

4. Indicate the practice briefly. Ordinarily it is at the end of the catechism lesson that the application and the exhortation find place, but it is not necessary to wait so long. If the children appear very well disposed, the resolution may be suggested during the course of the lesson. The best form to give it is that of a prayer addressed to God or to our Lord: "My God, I promise Thee....;" or: "For the love of Thee, O my Saviour Jesus, I resolve...." All the pupils are invited to take part in this resolution and actually to make it in their hearts with the teacher.

3. Motives of Acts.

Without the application of a power to run it, even the best-constructed machine remains motionless and turns out no work. It is the same with the soul; to tend toward the good, it needs powerful motors, capable of overcoming resistance from without and from within. These are chiefly the *motives* of our actions.

These motives are of different kinds, and the value which they give to our acts is in direct ratio to their purity and nobility. St. Bernard explains them in one of his letters. There are, he says, men who serve God because *He is good in Himself;* these are moved by filial love. There are others who serve Him because *He is good to them:* they consider chiefly the blessings which they have received from His hands or which they hope to receive; their love is mercenary; indeed, it is rather hope than love. Lastly, there are still others who serve Him because *He is powerful* and, like slaves, they are afraid of punishment.

To these three categories may be added a fourth, consisting of a multitude of men who, losing sight of God and of their supernatural destiny, fulfill some precepts and do some good acts, but from purely natural motives or from human respect.

Love is nobler than fear, and the excellence of love is in direct ratio to its disinterestedness. As their dispositions differ, all souls are not equally impressed with these various motives. An innocent soul, like that of a child, will be more accessible to love; a guilty soul, or one in the process of conversion, will be moved more by fear and hope.

The will of God should be the supreme rule of all our acts. It is the motive which children understand best, and the motive likewise that is most efficacious with them. "We must do this; God commands it. We must not do that; God forbids it. Such an accident has happened; God has permitted it, and we must submit to His will."

But, as is well known, obedience to God's will may itself be prompted by various motives. To excite love, often speak to your pupils of the goodness and the mercy

of God. To awaken hope, speak of heaven and of the reward that is there awaiting them. To stir their souls to their depths, to pierce their flesh with the fear of God,[1] as the royal prophet exclaims so forcibly, and to make them afraid of His judgments, draw a realistic picture of the torments of hell and the sufferings of purgatory.

But do not abuse these terrible considerations, for religion would then assume a repulsive aspect in the eyes of the children. It would seem to them like a dark cloud charged with a threatening tempest and ready to dart forth fateful strokes of lightning.

Again, do not utterly neglect natural motives, provided they are honorable. There are occasions in which one passion is a help to overcome another: desire for gain or love of glory may triumph over sloth, care for one's reputation may keep one from serious moral disorders, etc. In proposing these motives from time to time, imitate the Holy Ghost, who does not disdain to make use of them to snatch a soul from sin and to place it in the way of salvation. As it advances therein, He perfects its motives, leading it from purely natural repentance to imperfect contrition and thence to perfect contrition and charity.

Learn also to make use of the natural affection of children for their parents, for their brothers and sisters. Teach them to pray and to fulfill their duties with a view to draw down God's special graces on the family: graces of conversion, perhaps; but certainly graces of salvation. You thus transform their natural love into a principle of charity for their neighbor. When you have once started this movement, extend it: have the children pray and prac-

[1] Ps. cxviii, 120.

tise acts of virtue for their companions, for sinners, for the sick, for the souls in purgatory, for missions, for the conversion of America, for good vocations to the priesthood and the religious life, for the whole Church.

The direction in which this movement tends is not a matter of indifference. If it starts with vast intentions and then goes to those of narrower scope, the soul is dwarfed and its energy is turned in upon itself. Therefore, prefer the opposite course: begin with restricted intentions and go to more extensive and to apostolic intentions. Acting in this way, you will cultivate the zeal of your pupils and enlarge the horizon of their piety.

Finally, bear in mind that one of the most effective motive-powers for children is good example. Place before them the models which God Himself proposes for our imitation: the saints and, above all, the Saint of Saints, the Son of God made man, our Lord Jesus Christ. Excite in your pupils the desire to imitate Him, with a view to please God and assure their salvation, since all are *predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son.*[1] To encourage them in this work and to lessen its difficulty, give them the benefit of your own personal example, so that, with the great Apostle, you may say to them: *Be ye followers of me, brethren, and observe them who walk so, as you have our model.*[2] *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.*[3]

[1] Rom. viii, 29. [2] Philip. iii, 17. [3] 1 Cor. xi, 1.

CHAPTER VII.

INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

SUMMARY.

Purpose and Division of the Chapter.
1. The Christian Spirit. Necessity. The Theological Virtues. Spirit of Sacrifice. Zeal.
2. The Christian Conscience. Light and Power. Directions. The Attitude of Combat. Humility.
3. Christian Practices. Prayer; Confession; Holy Mass; Holy Communion; Devotions.

In the catechism classes, as at home and at school, the whole work of religious instruction and education should tend to make the child a good Christian, a true disciple of Jesus Christ. The principal points in this introduction to the Christian life may be treated briefly under the following heads:

1. The Christian spirit;
2. The Christian conscience;
3. Christian practices.

1. The Christian Spirit.

Many of our contemporaries see in Christianity nothing but a system of exterior practices, the heritage of tradition, having no influence whatever on the nature of our existence. This error is so much the more baleful because it tends to influence the practical life of so-called Catholics. It is the catechist's duty to combat this error and to teach his pupils that, although the Christian life needs liturgic practices to manifest its presence and to

feed its strength, yet its true center is in the inmost recesses of the soul, where it regulates and sanctifies our thoughts, our desires, our affections, our resolutions—in a word, all our actions.

The substance of this interior life is formed and fashioned by the exercise of the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity.

In raising our minds to God and making them cleave to His word, Faith reforms our judgments and teaches us to estimate the world, its riches and its pleasures in the light of eternal truth. It teaches us to appraise them at their value in God's eyes, and, therefore, to look upon them as being in themselves vain and empty, but as being for us an occasion of merit or demerit, according to the use that we make of them.

Hope fixes our gaze on heaven, whither it directs our desires and affections. In so far it also detaches us from earth and protects us against the seductions of pleasure and the allurements of sin.

Charity is the exercise on earth of that love which, in heaven, will forever unite us inseparably to God and His elect.

Although charity is the noblest of these three virtues, although it is the end and aim of the catechist's labors, yet the other two virtues demand assiduous culture, for they are in very truth the roots of man's spiritual life. Even when grievous sin comes as a killing blight upon the tree of divine charity, the roots still remain and, by the grace of the Holy Ghost, who will cause the sap to circulate, the tree may later put forth new shoots.

Therefore, always speak to your pupils the language of

faith. Oppose, reject forcibly every idea, every maxim contrary to faith. Enkindle hope in them; often point out heaven to them and describe its incomparable excellence. Treat your pupils as elect of heaven, and speak to them of that blessed country as if they all were really to possess it. "When you go to heaven..... When we shall be united with God....." A desire for heaven and confidence that one can gain it are most powerful agents for keeping the soul to the right way and leading it surely to the goal.

In our fallen state, these three virtues, and the others that form their attractive bodyguard, can attain complete development only in those souls that triumph over a multitude of evil influences coming from the devil, the world, and their passions. In each of us there is a perpetual strife between good and evil, between virtue and vice. Of this truth you must not leave your pupils in ignorance. It is your duty to instruct them and to train them for this spiritual combat, whose issue must be their everlasting happiness or their undying woe. Now, it is by combating that they learn to combat; it is by denying themselves innocent pleasures that they develop strength to resist the assaults of the evil one. Hence it is that the Christian spirit is not merely a spirit of faith and love; it is also, and by a necessary consequence, a spirit of sacrifice. Our Lord unceasingly reminds us of this great truth: *If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*[1] It would be a denial of your Master, a betrayal of souls, to dissimulate or weaken this doctrine of salvation, and

[1] Luke ix, 23.

to let children grow up in that self-indulgence which would soon bring on their ruin.

In a word, the Christian spirit is a spirit of zeal, a spirit of apostolate and of conquest. It is in the nature of fire to spread. In a greater degree than to material fire does this property belong to that divine fire which Jesus came to kindle upon earth.[1] After receiving it, you should not shut it up in your heart, but communicate it to those with whom you come in contact. Every Christian should, to some extent, be an apostle if he would not see this fire of divine charity die out in his own heart. Undoubtedly, the display of zeal should be regulated by prudence; but take care lest, under the pretext of prudence, you extinguish it altogether. Zeal for your neighbor's welfare is the best preservative of your own virtue, provided that in practising it you take the necessary precautions and follow the directions of a wise and enlightened guide.

2. The Christian Conscience.

The Christian conscience possesses both light and strength: light to discern good from evil, and strength to cleave to the former and energetically reject the latter.

But it needs to be formed, and this formation is not the least important of your works as a catechist. Therefore, teach your pupils to judge themselves and to judge all things not by the false standards of worldly prejudice, but by the light of everlasting truth. At the same time strive to inspire them with such a love for what is good and such horror for what is evil that nothing may ever turn them from the path of known duty. "This is good;

[1] Luke xii, 49.

that is wrong;" therefore, away with all dallying—the point is settled! A truly Christian conscience offers an invincible resistance to evil; no bait can lure it, no menace affright it, no oppression bend its resolution. Such was the conscience revealed in the midst of most frightful torments by millions on millions of martyrs. Even the old law was not without sublime examples set by those who were young in years and even by members of the weaker sex. Joseph urged on to sin by the wife of his master; Susanna placed by the infamous elders, her judges, in the cruel dilemma of a shameful death or of infidelity to God; the three Hebrew youths, companions of Daniel, condemned to the flames of the fiery furnace; the seven brothers Machabees, etc.—let such examples, which holy Church ceaselessly calls to our minds, be a lesson and a source of encouragement to young Christians of our day in the midst of their difficulties!

Be very clear in your explanation of moral questions; point out distinctly what is commanded, what is forbidden, and what is permitted; what is of obligation, and what of counsel. In directing the way to better gifts, as the Apostle wishes,[1] be on your guard against exaggeration in doctrine and all impulsive eagerness in practice.

Determine accurately the proper sequence in the fulfillment of duty. First of all, whatever be the cost, mortal sin must be shunned. Then the greater venial sins should be attacked; after these, the slighter venial sins, and, last of all, mere imperfections.

Among the moral precepts there are four in particular which you should constantly recall to your pupils, for they

[1] 1 Cor. xii, 31.

constitute the very foundation of their conscience and their moral nature. These are:

1. Reverence—respect for religion and for God's holy name;

2. Love of the truth—horror of lying;

3. Honesty—horror of theft;

4. Chastity—horror of impurity and of everything that leads thereto.

Add as a practical means of preservation from sin, flight from occasions of sin and especially from evil companions and dangerous reading.

But the Christian conscience must not only be trained to face evil like a strong fortress which the enemy can neither take nor reduce; it must also, like an invading army, assume an aggressive attitude and, far from awaiting the enemy's attack, must press forward and resolutely drive him back. An army condemned to keep on the defensive is lost unless help comes betimes. Hence, you must train your young Christian pupils to combat their defects and their vicious inclinations, the fruitful sources of so many sins.

In them, as future champions of truth, you should strive to develop early in life a combative ardor against secret societies and other enemies of God and of the Church. *I have hated them with a perfect hatred,* says the royal prophet; *and they are become enemies to me.*[1] In this great ruler, therefore, there were none of the futile objections, so common to-day, between his conscience as a private individual and his conscience as king engaged in affairs of government. If this be translated into the lan-

[1] Ps. cxxxviii, 22.

guage of children it means, according to Abbé Gellé: "When I grow up, I will do this or that; I will defend the Church and her priests; I will never oppose their work," etc. For Catholic children the priest is the very personification of religion.

How, then, are you to reconcile this hatred of the wicked with the precept of charity? In this way: We sincerely love all men, even our enemies; we ardently desire the conversion of sinners and we pray for them; but when they pose as enemies of God we oppose them, in order to prevent the spread of evil and to give occasion for the conversion of the wicked.

While you are strengthening the conscience of the children and, in the words of the Psalmist,[1] are preparing their *hands to fight and* their *fingers to war,* do not forget to inculcate lessons of Christian humility; not, indeed, with a view to make them timid and cowardly, but to teach them to put their whole trust in God, to go to Him in all dangers, to draw from Him the strength to become invincible in all combats and victorious over all enemies.

3. Christian Practices.

Out of all the practices of Christian piety special attention should be paid to prayer, confession, the holy Mass and holy Communion. It is, therefore, in order to indicate the principal devotions suitable to children.

Prayer.

In various places in this book mention has been made of the great duty of prayer and of the means to be taken to form the habit of prayer in children. Insistence on

[1] Ps. cxliii, 1.

this topic should not be matter of astonishment. In heaven the perpetual occupation, the supreme happiness of the elect is prayer. Here on earth, where Christians are apprentices for the life of the blessed, prayer should tend to become with them almost as uninterrupted as respiration. It should sanctify and sweeten all their acts by referring them to God. Even through the obscurity of the veil of faith, it should, as far as possible, unite them to Him who is their supreme good, their last and only end.

Prayer is the life of all other religious practices; it animates them and gives them their value and their efficacy. Even the sacraments, great channels of grace as they are, are at least in part, subject to the same law. It is, indeed, true that, according to the teaching of the Church, the sacraments operate of themselves in virtue of their divine institution; but, just as the quantity of water drawn from a spring depends on the capacity of the vessel brought to receive it, so the efficacy of the sacraments, though not limited in itself, is yet limited in fact and proportionate to the dispositions of the recipient.

Now, these dispositions are revealed in the degree and the intensity of prayer of which the soul becomes capable. It is by prayer that the soul prepares for the sacrament; it is while engaged in prayer that the soul receives the sacrament; and it is also by prayer that it preserves the fruits of the sacrament.

Prayer is the key of heaven. It opens the gates of paradise and procures the help necessary to enter therein. By it the soul avoids difficulties and triumphs over obstacles. By its means it obtains pardon for sin and perseverance

in good. St. Liguori sums up its power in these words: "He who prays will be saved; he who does not pray will be damned." O dear catechist, how great is the importance of your mission, since it is your duty to teach many the great art of prayer!

The manner of teaching children the formulas of prayer and enabling them to understand their meaning, has already been pointed out;[1] but to develop in them the spirit of prayer, without which all your labor would be in vain, the chief means is to become a man of prayer and meditation yourself. Only he who is accustomed to converse with God can speak worthily of God and excite in others a desire and a relish for prayer. Only such a one possesses the grace of prayer. For piety is a gift of the Holy Ghost; and to communicate it to others God makes use of those who are filled with it themselves. Let it then be the great longing of your heart to become a man of God, a man of prayer; to be filled with God's grace, in order to impart it to others, especially to the dear souls entrusted to your care.

Confession.

Who can tell the extent of God's mercies? *He knoweth our frame,* says the Psalmist, *He remembereth that we are dust.*[2] Therefore, *as a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him.*[3] *According to the height of the heaven above the earth, He hath strengthened His mercy toward them that fear Him.*[4] Now, of all the inventions of God's mercy, none surpasses the sacrament of Penance in ingenious condescension and

[1] Part II, chap. i. [2] Ps. cii, 14. [3] *Ibid.* 13. [4] *Ibid.* 11.

marvelous efficacy. Would it be possible for even God to make the conditions of pardon less than they are? Sincere repentance, humble avowal of one's faults to a consecrated minister, and immediately, at his word, grace descends and again takes possession of the heart from which it had been banished. It changes a sinner and a reprobate into a just soul, into a saint worthy to be admitted to the realms of undying glory.

Often meditate on the excellence of this sacrament, and inspire your pupils with profound esteem for its worth. Teach them to shun sin, to resist temptation with all their strength; but, if they should have the misfortune to fall, let them make haste to rise again. *If we confess our sins,* says St. John, *He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity.*[1] Like this great apostle, make use of the thought of God's goodness and mercy to turn your pupils from evil: *My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin.* Then add with him: *But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just; and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*[2]

It is not part of the plan of this book to insist on the necessity of frequent confession for children. Gerson looked upon it as the most efficacious means to lead them to Jesus Christ and to train them to an honorable Christian life. It is sufficient here to add our humble voice to the weighty authority of this pious doctor, and merely to beg the priests of the Lord always to extend a kindly welcome to the children and the youths who seek their

[1] 1 John i, 9. [2] 1 John ii, 1, 2.

ministrations. If they once meet with rebuff, or if they are obliged to wait a long time, many of them will become so discouraged as never to come again. Moreover, the invitation given by our Holy Father to all Christians to resume the custom of frequent and even daily communion inevitably entails at least relative frequency of confession.[a]

The Holy Mass.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass, the continuation and renewal through the ages of the great sacrifice of the Cross, is the center of Catholic liturgy, the principal act of Christian worship, an inexhaustible treasury of spiritual riches.

Strive to fill your pupils with a profound respect, a high esteem for this divine sacrifice, and teach them how to assist at it with devotion.

In the case of very young children, let your instruction dwell on exterior objects. Explain to them the meaning of the altar, the crucifix, the chalice, the host, the priest's vestments, and some of the principal ceremonies.

Later on you can take up the constituent parts of the Mass: the *preparation* or *Mass of Catechumens,* containing prayers and instructions; the *oblation* or Offertory; the *immolation* at the Elevation; the *consuming* of the victim at the Communion; and, last of all, the *thanksgiving.*[1]

At the same time, tell them the principal sentiments to excite in their souls at each of these parts, in order to join with the priest and share in the sacrifice.

[a] See page 115 for pedagogic directions on the preparation of children for confession.

[1] See *Manual of Christian Doctrine,* pp. 514-534, of this series; also *Worship,* pp. 617-685.

You should likewise instruct them on the nature of spiritual communion and on the ineffable happiness of communicating sacramentally as often as they are allowed to do so.

To the older pupils explain the four ends for which the Mass is offered, wherein it replaces and excels all the sacrifices of the old law. Like the holocaust of old, it is a sacrifice of adoration; like the peace offering, it is eucharistic and impetratory, since its purpose is to thank God for His blessings and to beg for favors; it is also offered as a victim of propitiation for the pardon of sin. Teach them to hear Mass by uniting in spirit with the dispositions of the saving Victim who is actually offering Himself on the altar for these four ends, the summary of man's duties to God.

Accustom the children from their tender years to make use of a book to follow the Mass and to prepare to receive the sacraments; but teach them how to use it with profit. The book is a help to stir up good sentiments and to prevent the omission, through forgetfulness, of any of the principal duties of piety. But warn the children that the formulas contained in the book are not of obligation and may be replaced by the beads or by other prayers of their own choice.

Holy Communion.

If men but knew the excellence of this heavenly food, how eagerly would they not approach the holy table! Therefore, teach the children this great mystery; train them to fulfill their duties to the holy Eucharist. Create and sustain in them an ever-increasing hunger for the Bread of Angels, and, with a view to preparing them to

receive it, encourage them to emulate the purity and the love of these blessed spirits.

Give all the help you can to retreats in preparation for solemn communion. In anticipation, have the children learn some hymns and likewise some acts of preparation and of thanksgiving, but in each case after first commenting upon their meaning. Watch over the children in church and even outside the church door. In the intervals between the principal exercises, occupy them piously; tell them edifying stories, help them to prepare for confession, suggesting and, if necessary, presiding at certain exercises of piety.

After they have made their first communion, encourage your pupils, as far as possible, to cultivate the practice of frequent and even daily communion. For the habit must be begun while the children are still attending school. The decrees of his Holiness, Pope Pius X, on this subject dissipate all apprehension on this score, and give sure and authentic directions, as they are in perfect conformity with the oft-expressed desire of the divine heart of Jesus.

Devotions.

The devotions to favor in the catechism classes are those which are the most important by reason of their object and likewise the best suited to the age and the circumstances of the children. Give them solid instruction, and indicate substantial, though generally short, practices. But refrain from burdening them with your personal preferences; respect the freedom of souls and the direction of the Holy Ghost.

The principal devotion for children is devotion to the holy Child Jesus, their divine model.

Then should come devotion to the holy Eucharist, and likewise to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother and protectress of all Christians.

An important place should be given also to devotion to the holy Guardian Angels. Was it not when welcoming little children that our divine Saviour made known this touching proof of the solicitude of God's providence for men? If He invites us to think of the angels in order to prevent all scandal, how much more attentive should not children be made to the presence of their heavenly guardians, in order to keep themselves from sin and be inspired with confidence in the power, and gratitude for the care, of these blessed spirits!

Then, too, there is devotion to St. Joseph, the guardian and protector of the Child Jesus; as also devotion to special patrons of youth and the particular patrons of the individual children.

Lastly, inspire your pupils with tender charity for the souls in purgatory. Accustom them, for the relief and deliverance of these suffering souls, frequently to offer good works and acts of piety; and particularly to assist with this attention at the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

CHAPTER VIII.

SPECIAL CATECHISMS.

SUMMARY.

1. For Young People. Doctrinal Character of their Instruction. Formation of a Select Body. Frequentation of the Sacraments. Associations. Lay Catechists. Vocations.

2. For Backward Pupils. Two Kinds. Program.

3. For Converts. Character of their Instruction; No Controversy. Motives of Conversion.

4. For the Sick. Different Cases. Spiritual Assistance of the Sick.

1. For Young People.

To the clergy belongs, by right of office, the mission of imparting higher instruction in religion. Yet all persons consecrated to the education of youth may share in this teaching, and for their benefit some very practical points are now given.

When children leave the grammar grades or the corresponding catechism classes, their religious education is only rudimentary. This instruction must be completed; the faint impression already produced must be strengthened and made indelible. This result must be sought in clubs for boys and girls, in the social circles of young men and young women, in literary and scientific societies, in reading circles, in the perseverance classes of parochial Sunday schools, and in the classes of boarding and day academies and colleges.

Moreover, the religious teaching given to the young must be doctrinal rather than polemical; for it is instruction that they need, not discussion. An ample and luminous

explanation of Catholic truth is a vital necessity for them: it will make their faith strong and lively; it will enable them to enlighten their companions who are in search of the truth; it will help them to solve the doubts and difficulties of honest souls who appeal to them for help.

This general principle, however, is entirely compatible with a variety of explanations adapted to special circumstances. A class of young workmen presents one set of conditions, a group of university students another, and a gathering of poorly instructed adults or soldiers quite another phase. It is your duty as catechist to study the intellectual and moral needs of your pupils, and adapt yourself to them.

In all classes of children, and more particularly in classes of young people, the aim of those in charge should be to form a select group. In an army there must be officers; to direct the masses there must be leaders. Our Lord insists on this point. He would have His Apostles the salt of the earth, the light of the world,[1] the leaven which leavens the measures of meal.[2] Hence, it should be the ambition of the catechist to choose out of all the pupils entrusted to him a select band with special fitness to meet their circumstances of time and place. From this group in turn he should pick another that is still more excellent. He will easily find suitable material if he looks for it; and it is his duty to cultivate it carefully.

In all its grades religious instruction should be practical. Its aim is not merely to enlighten the intellect, but to sanctify the soul. The special means to this end is frequent and fervent, as well as regular, reception of the

[1] Matt. v, 13, 14. [2] Matt. xiii, 33.

sacraments. The catechist should do all in his power to lead his pupils to this practice without, however, subjecting them to any uniform rule in the matter. Not all souls have the same aptitudes; not all experience the same needs. Quiet natures with moderate aspirations may be content with the ordinary practices of religion; while others, more eager and more passionate, cannot get along with only these means: even for their perseverance they require to be sustained by the food of intense piety and by the exercise of zeal and charity. Undoubtedly this is a happy necessity both for them and for their associates, who are greatly benefited by their example and their salutary activity. Directors of catechism courses should not neglect these precious forces. They should learn to discover them, to cultivate them, to direct them, and to turn them to good use.

Various societies for the young may serve as training schools for zeal and piety. Such are different pious associations, sodalities in honor of the Sacred Heart, the Blessed Virgin, etc., reading and study circles, junior Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, etc. These societies are not organized for identical purposes; yet, where an association is large, there is nothing to prevent several of the members from taking up a project together; nor is there any reason why a young man belonging to a given pious association, should not also join a reading circle or a conference of St. Vincent de Paul. All efforts for good are to be encouraged unless they conflict with the fulfillment of duty. Supervision and direction are, of course, necessary for these various special activities; but the direction should be on broad lines, lest it destroy all initiative; and

the supervision should be kindly, not nagging, and should display a generous regard for the liberty of the young.

Among the works of zeal and charity open to the young, none is more excellent, none more useful, none more necessary even, than the ministry of catechist. For those who come from Catholic schools, it may be added that few good works are relatively as easy. Wherever, therefore, the parish clergy are willing to accept their coöperation, the responsible officers of societies for the young should turn in this direction the activities of their most promising members. To be agreeable to the prospective teachers, their work in this field must not be limited to mere supervision. Such passive coöperation, whose value one of riper years could well appreciate, would be little relished by younger men; for they are too eager to engage in action, to do something, and to feel that they are doing something. To encourage them and to make good use of their abilities, it is necessary to take them as they are. Do not expect from them a self-denial beyond their age, nor put their zeal to a test that is likely to repel their advances.

The function of lay catechist may be exercised first in behalf of backward children by members of societies for self-improvement, etc. The younger members of the St. Vincent de Paul Societies might gather together and instruct the children of the families which they visit, or even other children sent to them for the purpose by older members of the conference.[a]

[a] The Ozanam Clubs for boys are an offshoot of the St. Vincent de Paul Conferences, and are doing good work in New York City and elsewhere. While gymnastics and athletic exercises are a prominent feature, the real purpose of the clubs is to afford the boys proper religious training and to surround them with moral safeguards.

Again, why not, from time to time, place on the program of exercises for reading circles or literary societies, a paper on either the teaching of catechism in general, its religious and social importance, or some question of catechetical method? Such topics might be made subjects of very interesting and practical discussions if the circle consisted largely of catechists.

If the ideas just advanced were to be applied with method, perseverance, and discretion, they would certainly help to develop excellent religious and priestly vocations. For enlightened and fervent piety, zeal for the salvation of souls, and devotedness to the instruction of children and the ignorant with a beginning of success in this gentle, but important, ministry are fruitful roots of an apostolic vocation. Moved by grace, the young catechist sees his field of labor enlarge, and he longs to consecrate to this saving work, not a few fleeting moments snatched from absorbing earthly occupations, but his days, his years, his strength, his mind, his heart, his whole life. What a blessing for him, for his family, for the school and the association in which he has grown up, is such a vocation whose seed he owes in a sense to them, and whose future is bright with happy omens!

2. For Backward Pupils.

The term "backward" may be applied to those children or young people who have not attended catechism lessons and are in entire ignorance of religion. A providential circumstance brings them in contact with a priest or with some pious and charitable layman who undertakes to instruct them and prepare them for confession and communion.

There is also another class of backward pupils. It consists of children who have attended school and catechism classes, but who have been able to learn next to nothing, owing to their lack of memory and understanding. To take pity on these mental indigents, to help them learn at least the indispensable truths and thus to assure their salvation, is an excellent work of Christian charity, which is so much the more meritorious because of its disinterestedness.

For both of these classes of backward pupils instruction must be confined to what is essential: the former lack time and opportunity, while the latter are deprived of the aptitude for more extended instruction. As, in general, each pupil will need special attention, the instruction must ordinarily be actually or virtually individual.

The most important part of the program for backward pupils is the prayers, especially the principal formulas, together with the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition.

As far as possible, attach the doctrinal explanations to these formulas, and strive to make prayer so enter into the life of these pupils that they will never lose the habit. While prayer lasts, religion subsists; when prayer is forgotten, religion departs, and with it go grace and salvation.

The essential points of doctrine are these:

1. The three principal mysteries;
2. The last ends, heaven and hell;
3. The definition of each of the seven sacraments;
4. The essentials of the sacraments of Penance and holy Eucharist, together with a simple and easy method for confession and communion;[1]

After that, the rest of the little catechism[2] may be

[1] See *Catechism for First Communion*, Christian Brothers' Series. [2] See *Catechism No. 1*, Christian Brothers' Series.

explained, and, if possible, some chapters of a larger catechism.

Do not forget that it is a matter of the first importance to inspire these pupils with love for God and horror for sin, together with sincere repentance for their faults and a firm purpose both to avoid them for the future, and, as far as possible, to shun bad company and occasions of sin.

Teach them also how to spend the day in a Christian manner and to sanctify the labors and sufferings of this life. Profit by the period of preparation for the sacraments to train them to these good habits.

3. For Converts.

Every soul created by God is our brother in Christ, who, to save it, came down from heaven and deigned to suffer the torments of a most shameful death. It is the will of our Father in heaven that we should have its interest at heart and, with a view to its salvation, unite our prayers and sacrifices to the agony of our Saviour and the bitter anguish of His passion. It is His will also that, as far as we can, we strive to rescue souls that are going astray and, by good advice and other means at our disposal, endeavor to lead these lost sheep back to the fold of the one true Shepherd.

In missionary countries, the conversion of infidels is the work of catechists chiefly; to them, to a large extent, is entrusted the instruction of catechumens and of the newly baptized. The narratives of celebrated conversions tell us how large a part Divine Providence has left to Christian friends in the work of effecting a return to the true faith or to the practice of religion, by famous dissidents or

notorious unbelievers. Undoubtedly, when positive instruction is to be given to a convert, the priest alone seems qualified for the task; but there is often a preparatory period that goes before the conversion properly so called. It is in this period that the charitable intervention of instructed and devoted friends may be of great profit.

It is worthy of note that, in most cases, controversy plays little part in the work of conversion. Its influence is limited to the learned; and, even then, to be effective it must be skilfully disguised under the exposition of doctrine, after the manner of St. Francis de Sales, and it must always be permeated with charity.

In speaking to unbelievers, the catechists of foreign missions neither attack nor discuss. Their method is both simple and rapid. In the presence of the catechumens they recite the prayers and the principal doctrinal formulas, the Apostles' Creed and the Commandments, making such short commentaries on them as are suited to the needs of their hearers. In this way, with the help of God's grace, faith finds an entrance in such souls as offer no opposition.

To turn to God a soul that previously had been afar off and absorbed in earthly things, to *make it pray*—this is *conversion;* this is the beginning of salvation.

Earlier in this book[a] the motives of our actions have been considered. This topic may also be extended to motives of conversion, but it should not be applied too strictly. Although, in general, sinners are brought back to God through motives of fear, the nobler and more generous souls are soon prompted by love. There are even

[a] See Part II, chap. vi, p. 153.

souls who are affected only by the highest and boldest considerations of God's goodness and mercy. To take one example among a thousand, there is that hardened old sinner who obstinately refused to confess because, he said, the number and enormity of his crimes would not allow him to hope for pardon. "If that is so," replied Father Millériot, "I have a remedy for you. Now, repeat after me the prayer of a great sinner who, like you, had been guilty of every crime—theft, murder, and the rest: *'Lord, be merciful to me, for I am a great sinner!'* Don't you see that it is much more glorious for God to pardon a great sinner like you, than thousands of others who have committed only peccadilloes?" "That's so!" replied the old reprobate; "the more of a brute I have been, the more glory will God get for pardoning me." And he at once confessed his sins with deep contrition.

So do you skilfully sound the depths of souls, make all the efforts in your power, become a discreet helper of the grace that visits the needy, and aid them to make it efficacious.

4. For the Sick.

In God's designs sickness is often an acceptable time when suffering and tribulation prepare the soul to receive the grace either of conversion or of progress in virtue. The hour of sickness, especially of his last illness, are for a faithful Christian the most precious in his life. It is the time of rapid development to maturity. As happens in nature, the fruit was, indeed, slow to form and grow; but now its time is drawing near, and in a few hours it will be ripe enough to pluck.

Nevertheless, to derive such advantages from suffering, the patient generally needs some one to come to the relief of his weakness by suggesting sentiments to which it is in a sense only necessary for him to give assent. This is why holy Mother Church insists so strongly on the presence of the priest at the bedside of the dying. This is also the reason why visiting the sick has always been regarded as one of the works of Christian charity most meritorious in itself and most pleasing to God.

In one way this excellent work comes within the sphere of the lay catechist, and for this reason it is included in the present chapter. For the teaching of catechism brings him into relation not only with individual children, but also with their respective families. If the child or one of the family falls sick, he hastens to pay him a visit. Then, sometimes, he "mistakes the address," to quote the expression used at the Paris Congress by an excellent catechist, who apparently had contracted this diplomatic habit. He is looking for his pupil, but he finds another child, or perhaps an adult or a sick person. But that does not matter; he enters into conversation with him, and the rest can be imagined.

Several cases may arise calling for the exercise of charity to the sick.

The patient may be ignorant of his religion, and it may be necessary to prepare him for the sacraments. In that case, plan according to the probable available time and the degree of aptitude which he manifests. After all, the knowledge absolutely indispensable for salvation may be reduced to a very small number of truths: God, the life to come, heaven and hell, and probably the three principal

mysteries: the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. In urgent cases be content with this. It is not even necessary for the patient to commit the formula to memory. Let him cleave, by an act of faith, to the truth which is explained to him; especially if he seeks God with a sincere heart, and firmly hopes for pardon from His infinite mercy. This is all that should be expected of him. The grace of God, so full of power and so swift to influence, will do the rest.

If, however, there be time, the instruction may include those truths that are necessary as being of divine *precept.* These comprise at least the substance, if not the text, of the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments of God and of the Church, and the doctrine relating to the sacraments already received or about to be received.

Here, again, you must consider the greater or less fatigue of the patient, as well as his aptitude, and address yourself rather to his heart than to his head.

This is the indispensable part of the work, the labor of catechizing properly so called; but the zealous catechist does not stop here. Quick to note the motions of grace in the patient, he tries to second them discreetly by suggesting the thoughts and sentiments of which he believes the sick person now capable. Patient endurance of sickness and pain in atonement for sin; thorough submission to God's will in union with the sufferings of our Saviour on the cross; the acceptance of death as the wages of sin and as an entire satisfaction to God's justice, as a perfect holocaust to the Supreme Being; the offering of one's sufferings and one's life for the conversion of sinners and unbelievers, for the needs of the Church, of the Pope

and other pastors of souls: these are some of the acts and intentions of great value which are capable of enriching in a short time a soul that is already at the gates of eternity. These acts may be multiplied and perfected, particularly after the patient has received Extreme Unction, whose efficacy in this respect is even palpable. In conclusion, bear in mind that you cannot too forcibly oppose the anti-Christian custom prevalent in certain countries of calling the priest only when the patient is almost beyond the state of profiting by the marvelous graces of faith, hope, resignation, and love of God stored up for him in this benign sacrament of Extreme Unction.

CHAPTER IX.

REVIEWS.

SUMMARY.

General Idea. Utility of Reviews.

1. Reviews in the Strict Sense. Diverse Procedures.

2. Other Review Exercises. Catechisms on the Principal Truths; General Reviews; Recreative Catechisms.

3. Catechism Examinations and Competitions. Examinations at the End of the Year; Examinations for First Communion.

4. Catechism Festivals. Utility; Special Catechetical Exercises. First Communion.

Frequent reviews and recapitulations have already been recommended in this book as a means of fixing in the child's memory what he has already learned. They serve to connect the different lessons, and, by that very fact, they throw more light on the doctrine in question. Again, these bird's-eye views impress the pupils favorably by revealing to them more fully God's greatness and goodness, His admirable providence, and the marvelous inventions of His love.

Every recapitulation presupposes that the details of the doctrine now reviewed have been studied and understood. Its natural place is either at the end of a topic, or at the close of a series of topics, or of a definite part of the catechism.

Moreover, either on a fixed date or as occasions offers, other review exercises of various forms may be required.

1. Reviews in the Strict Sense.

They may be made in various ways:

1. The catechist may personally question the pupils and thus assure himself that they remember and understand what they have studied.

2. The pupils may question one another. In this case, they should be divided into two groups or camps of equal strength. The first pupil in each questions his rival on the text or the explanations. Should one of these leaders make a mistake, or be unable to answer, the other gives the answer and receives a good point or some note of merit.

The next two contend in the same way, and so on down the line.

Then the victors may be divided into two camps, and the contest begins over again.

This procedure may be followed until it results in a decisive victory. Some rewards should be given to the most deserving student.

3. A synoptic table may be drawn up embracing the matter of one lesson, or even of several lessons bearing on the same subject. This table is constructed by the pupils themselves under the direction of the teacher. All the terms referring to the subject under review are written in a column at the right of the blackboard as the pupils dictate them. The next step is to classify the ideas, and then the table should be constructed.[a] After this, the pupils are questioned in such a way as to complete the review. The lesson should terminate, as usual, with a brief exhortation.

A table may also be drawn up outlining one complete

[a] For models, see the volumes *Dogma, Moral, Worship* of the Christian Brothers' *Exposition of Christian Doctrine.*

section of the catechism. In the first column to the right may be written the titles of the chapters. The chapters relating directly to the same subject may be joined by a bracket, and before each of these brackets is written the key-word.

4. The kind of work just indicated may be demanded of the pupils as a written exercise or as home work. From time to time, in the case of the more important topics, those of the pupils who are capable of it may be asked to give orally, without interruption by questions from the teacher, a connected analysis or summary of the lesson. In this case, however, they should be warned in advance, so that during the lesson they may be attentive to every topic of importance.

2. Other Review Exercises.

With young children it is necessary to return frequently to the indispensable truths of salvation. Sometimes it may suffice to have them repeat the text, in order to fix the matter more securely in the memory; at other times they should be questioned on its meaning and obliged to recall the explanations previously given.

Each part of the catechism may be reviewed separately, or the review may turn upon the essential points in the different parts.

Occasionally, taking a more elevated viewpoint, the catechist may choose one of the principal truths. This he makes the center around which revolves the whole body of Christian doctrine.

For example, take the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. First, have it defined; then call for all the topics, in the catechism, relating to the Father; as, for instance, the

creation and providence; then for those relating to the Son, as the incarnation, the redemption, and judgment; and, finally, for those relating to the Holy Ghost, as the sanctification of souls, grace, prayer, the virtues, and the sacraments.

Reviews of this kind may be made to include even the whole Christian law. The commandments may be reviewed in this way:

—What does such a commandment oblige us to do?
—What does it forbid?
—What advantages does it procure for us?
—Which of our rights or our possessions does it protect?
—What would be the result if this commandment did not exist?

Or again:

—To what virtue does this commandment refer?
—What does it forbid? What does it order? What does it allow?
—To what virtue is such a forbidden act opposed?
—To what commandment is such a precept, or counsel, or maxim of the Gospel related?

There are also other forms of review that are extremely interesting to children, and that, for this reason, may be called *recreative catechisms*. They supply an element of variety of which the catechist may well avail himself on many an occasion when more serious or didactic teaching would be unpalatable or unprofitable, owing to fatigue on the part of the pupils or involuntary lack of preparation on his own part, etc.

The topics that follow may be more or less extended, according to the capacity of the pupils.

I. NUMBERS.—Dogmatic or historic truths may be classed under the category of number. This kind of catechism may take one of two forms:

1. Question in this way:

Tell to what the number *one* applies.—One God,
One person in Jesus Christ,
One true Church,
One faith, etc.

Tell to what the number *two* applies.—Two testaments in the Bible,
Two kinds of rational creature,
Two parts in man, etc.

The same may be done for Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, etc.

2. Adopt the inverse process, beginning all questions with the words, *How many?*

How many principal mysteries are there?
How many marks has the true Church? etc.

Insist on having all the mysteries, marks, etc., enumerated.

II. Other catechism lessons may be given, consisting of questions of like form, beginning with the same word.

1. WHAT?—What is God?
What is man?
What are angels?

In this way you can review all the definitions of the catechism.

2. WHAT DO WE CALL the Creator of heaven and earth?
the pure spirits created by God at the beginning of the world?

This form of question is the inverse of the preceding.

3. WHAT IS or WHAT ARE?—What is the sign of the Christian?
What is the first article of the Creed?
What is the mystery contained in that article?

4. How?—How did God form the body of the first man? How do you make the sign of the cross?

5. Why?—Why did the Apostles compose the Creed? Why was man created?

III. Texts of Scripture that refer to such and such a truth.

IV. Prayers.—Which are the acts to be found in morning prayer? Distinguish them by title, by their first words. The acts of night prayer, the principal acts of the Mass, acts before and after communion, aspirations or ejaculatory prayers to the Sacred Heart, to the Blessed Virgin, to St. Joseph, etc.; indulgenced prayers or practices; the mysteries of the Rosary; the stations of the Way of the Cross.

V. Ideas.—The teacher says a word; for example, the word *sin*. One of the pupils writes it on the blackboard, and the other pupils then tell everything in the catechism answers that refers in any way to this idea.

Ideas of this kind would be, for example, *angels*, *devils*, *soul*, *spirit*, *incarnation*, *redemption*, *baptism*, *penance*, *faith*, *charity*, *etc.*

After the correct answers have been found, they can be classified and arranged according to a plan which the pupils may be led to form. This plan, in turn, may become the basis of a new series of questions.

Lastly, an excellent method of reviewing either the catechism or sacred history is by means of stereopticon illustrations. In accordance with their capacity, the pupils might be questioned on the contents of the different views, the historical incident or the idea represented, the moral lesson to be drawn, etc.

3. Catechism Examinations and Competitions.

Besides the periodical, monthly or quarterly examinations customary in the Christian Brothers' Schools, where training in religion occupies a privileged place, in many

districts a special examination or competition is held at the end of the year, and in it many schools are often asked to take part. No practice is better calculated to maintain in a district a laudable emulation in the study of religion.

At Rome this annual examination is marked with great solemnity. It comprises an oral test and a written test. The purpose of the first is to eliminate the weaker candidates, and it consists in memory work. Each pupil is required to be *letter perfect* in the answers to ten questions taken at random from the two small catechisms prescribed by Pius X for the dioceses of the Province of Rome. The second is a test of intelligence. The candidates answer in writing easy questions on the meaning of certain texts chosen by an ecclesiastical commission belonging to the Roman Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine. The answers are judged and classified by this commission. The child who receives the highest number of points is declared *Emperor of Catechism.* The six following him form his court—viz.: four *princes,* one *captain,* and one *herald of arms.* These seven laureates received beautiful prizes from the Archconfraternity; and the emperor and the first two princes have the honor of being received in a private audience by the Holy Father, who presents them with a silver gift.

For some years past, other competitions have been organized for pupils of colleges and academies. For the intermediate classes of such institutions the tests are also of two kinds, while for the higher classes only a written examination is required on a topic drawn at random from three proposed by the commission. But the nomination

of *Emperor* and of *Princes* is limited to the primary courses.

These competitions bring out the most deserving students, but the number of winners is necessarily limited. To obviate this difficulty, the practice has been established, in many dioceses, of having several examinations of various grades for both boys and girls on a program previously announced, which includes, besides Catechism, Bible History, the History of the Church, and the Liturgy.

If this excellent plan were to be made general, the first examination might be placed at the end of the period of required attendance. It would then serve to mark the conclusion of the catechetical course for children. A second examination might be held at the termination of a fixed number of years of attendance at perseverance classes.

As in the competitions mentioned above, so in these examinations the tests might be both oral and written; the former based on the text of the catechism, the latter on the explanations given and other topics included in the program.

The marks given might entitle the successful competitors to diplomas, varying with the course examined upon, and graded as *Satisfactory* (Pass), *Good*, and *Very Good*. If the funds would allow of it, these displomas could be framed. They should be awarded at a public meeting and should form one of the principal elements in the catechism festivals described in the next section.

4. Catechism Festivals.

Both childhood and youth crave variety. Hence, it is wise, from time to time, to interpolate into the ordinary

series of exercises a more solemn reunion for which careful preparation has been made and to which the parents of the pupils may be invited. As Bishop Dupanloup remarks, "Nothing is really more charming or more attractive, nothing is purer or sweeter than these catechism festivals. Nothing equals the pleasure they give children, and the lasting impression they leave in their souls. . . . The exact uniformity of exercises is broken, and eager curiosity is excited by the novelty." [1]

For these catechism festivals it is feast days of the Church that are ordinarily chosen. The chapel or assembly room is tastefully decorated, and special hymns, in keeping with the occasion, are carefully prepared. These alternate with prayers and catechetical exercises.

The catechetical exercises may take one of the following forms:

1. Some of the pupils recite publicly that chapter of the catechism which they have drawn by lot.

2. Two or three pupils explain in turn the special topic which they have prepared, and on which they are required to answer questions asked by their classmates, according to previously determined form and extent.

3. The pupils may recite short themes. "As they are called upon by the catechist, some pupils, chosen from the best-behaved and most intelligent in the class, arise, one after another, and, in a loud voice, explain to the other pupils the object and the spirit of the feast." [2] Of course, these little addresses must have been previously corrected by the catechist, or, at least, examined by him. They are returned to the pupils appointed to recite them, who are

[1] *L'Oeuvre par excellence.* [2] *Ibid.*

to commit them to memory and to practise speaking them well. Such sermons preached by children are often very efficacious.

4. There is also the interest attached to dialogue. In place of one orator, there may be two or three speakers who question and answer one another. The curiosity of the auditors is thus more keenly excited, and the truth so presented is impressed more deeply on their minds. Fénelon highly recommends this means.

5. Lastly, if the hall is suitable and the necessary means are at the catechist's disposal, he may represent the appropriate mystery dramatically by a devotional scene, the rôles in which have been carefully distributed and well rehearsed.

6. If means for such representation be lacking, there is still left the resource of stereopticon or similar illustration. This allows the catechist to display and to explain a series of pictures referring chiefly to the mystery of the day, or to sum up the series of catechism or Bible history lessons which has just been completed.[a]

To crown the day, there might be a distribution of awards to the pupils, who would thus treasure the memory of this solemnity throughout their lives.

Of all the catechism festivals, the most solemn, as well as the most touching, is that of first communion. The Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X, has expressed the desire to see the praiseworthy custom of a collective solemn first communion extended throughout the world. So far is the decree *Quam singulari* from opposing this practice, that

[a] At the present time there is even a probability that "moving pictures" may yet be employed to advantage in furthering the work of the catechist.

it even suggests the establishment in every parish of one or two general communions, to which shall be admitted "not only the new communicants, but others who, with the consent of their parents or their confessor, shall have already partaken of the Holy Table." These communions should be "preceded by some days of instruction and preparation." If they are renewed from year to year as long as the children continue to attend the catechism classes, these solemn communions will be of great service in animating the fervor of the pupils and in enhancing in their eyes the excellence of the Blessed Sacrament.

There is nothing to prevent organizing, at the end of the catechism courses, a special feast for those children who have satisfied the conditions laid down by the bishops. Besides a solemn communion, prepared for by a retreat of several days, this closing feast should include the renewal of Baptismal Vows, Consecration to the Sacred Heart and to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and, finally, the distribution of the diplomas won by the children.

CHAPTER X.

PREPARATION.

SUMMARY.

Necessity of Preparation. Division of the Chapter.
1. Remote Preparation. Preparation of Mind and Heart. Means of Perfecting It. Normal Courses for Catechists.
2. Proximate Preparation. Necessity; Advantages. Preparation of Mind, of Matter and Form. Preparation of Heart.

Now that the catechist has taken count of the importance and the difficulty of his work, now that he sees more clearly the end to be attained and knows the means necessary to gain success, he will not be astonished to hear the glorious and saintly Pope Pius X insist so strongly on the necessity of a serious preparation before each and every catechism lesson.

"Now, it would be a mistake and far from Our intention," says the Holy Father, "were any one to conclude from what We have said about this striving after simplicity in religious instruction, that such manner of discourse calls for no effort, no thoughtful preparation. On the contrary, it demands much more than any other kind of public speaking. Far easier is it to find an orator who can deliver an elaborate and brilliant sermon than a catechist able to give a simple, but flawless, instruction. Therefore, however much one may be gifted by nature with ease in composition or fluency of expression, let him nevertheless be persuaded of this—that he will never derive

any real fruit for souls from his instructions on Christian doctrine to children or to the people, unless he has well prepared himself by long and careful study and meditation. It is a grievous mistake to count on the people's ignorance or slowness of comprehension, and use this as an excuse for negligence in the matter of preparation. The fact is, that the less cultured one's audience, the greater care and pains must be taken to bring within the reach of their feebler comprehension truths the most sublime and far above the reach of the ordinary intelligence, yet truths as necessary to salvation for the ignorant as for the learned." [1]

Before beginning the preparation of the lesson, the catechist must prepare himself for the exercise of his noble and useful functions; he has to make:

1. A general, or remote, preparation;
2. A particular, or proximate, preparation.

1. Remote Preparation.

This comprises all that the catechist should do to acquire and to increase the qualities and the aptitudes necessary for his mission. It refers to both mind and heart. It embraces the interior labor to acquire personal perfection, and likewise that other labor, not less necessary, which makes him master of the knowledge and the skill necessary in his profession.

In Part I, Chapter III, of this book, on the *Qualities of the Catechist,* may be found the whole program of this personal formation which is the indispensable condition of success.

[1] Encyclical *Acerbo nimis,* April 25, 1905.

Here it will suffice to suggest certain means referring specially to pedagogic or professional perfection:

1. *Fervent prayer,* since "every good and perfect gift cometh from above, from the Father of lights."[1]. The catechist may proffer his petitions with all the more confidence because of the nobility and the necessity of the object of his prayer; for it concerns the very glory of God and the salvation of a multitude of souls.

2. A *profound study* of good works on the method of teaching catechism.[a]

3. *Attending the lessons* of skilful catechists. Here he follows the words of the teacher closely and, at the same time, remarks the impression which they produce on the pupils. He takes account of the plan adopted, and of the exact relation between explanations and questions. He notes the questions which the pupils answer readily and those which seem beyond their grasp. He takes notice of apt comparisons and pays special attention to the procedures by which the teacher makes clear an idea that is obscure or abstract. In a word, he studies attentively in what ways and with what success the teacher applies known theories.

4. *Trial catechism lessons,* whether written or oral. He who prepares a catechism lesson ought to place himself in spirit in the presence of his supposed auditors and adapt himself to their capacity.

These trial lessons may be given in the presence of experienced friends. Their kind comments and criticisms

[1] James i, 17.

[a] See article on *Christian Doctrine,* in *Catholic Encyclopedia,* which, however, omits all reference to the Christian Brothers' Series, as yet the only complete series in English.

will be a complement to the young catechist's personal observations, and cannot fail to accelerate his progress.

In cities where normal courses for catechists are established, it would be well to annex to them a model catechism class for the trying of the pupil-teachers. This would extend to catechism a means universally employed to-day in other branches for the pedagogic formation of young teachers. The lessons given in the presence of the professor and some of the pupil-teachers would afterward be subjected to friendly criticism, in the course of which both professor and pupils would express their views.

These normal courses should possess a special library of books to be consulted, some referring more particularly to the doctrinal and the apologetic side of the teacher's training; others, to its pedagogical side.

2. Proximate Preparation.

What Pope Pius X thinks of this preparation has already been seen: he maintains that neither knowledge nor skill can dispense the catechist from special preparation for each lesson. Suppose that the catechist does know perfectly the subject that he is going to teach, and that he has it well in hand, does that suffice? Should he not also foresee the manner in which it should be arranged, the practical fruit to be derived from it, and the method to follow—all in keeping with the age and the dispositions of the pupils, and with the time at his disposal? Note also that the greater the distance between the capacity of the pupils and the intelligence of their teacher, the more efforts should he make to bring himself down to their level; the more necessary it is for him to reflect on

ways, to study and combine means, and, in a word, to seek the manner of adapting himself to the disposition of the pupils.

A serious preparation lightens the burden of teaching and multiplies the benefits derived.

There is a benefit *to the catechist.* Being master of his subject and its method, he retains more complete control of himself, and teaches with greater order, clearness and enthusiasm.

There is a benefit *to the pupils.* They have entire confidence in a professor whose knowledge and skill are beyond question. They are attentive to his words, which move the very depths of their souls, to which they impart light, strength, and love.

There is a benefit resulting *for discipline;* for the pupils, being absorbed in an occupation which they like, do not dream of frivolity or mischief.

There is a benefit *for education,* which is developed naturally in this family atmosphere impregnated with devotedness and confidence.

Like the remote preparation, the proximate preparation refers to mind and heart.

From the intellectual viewpoint, the first thing to do is to become saturated with the subject. It would be well for the catechist to know by heart the text to be explained and not be obliged to refer to the book, either to propose questions, or to detect the mistakes, or correct the answers of the pupils. A catechist who is obliged to consult his book loses thereby a great part of his authority in the eyes of his pupils.

It is not enough to know the letter of the catechism;

it is necessary also to study the sense, to note the distribution of answers, the shades of expression, the distinctions, restrictions, and correctives, and, indeed, all the elements furnished by the book and demanding or facilitating explanation.

After the subject has thus been foreseen and mapped out, the catechist should ask himself the following questions on the way of treating it:

1. How shall I introduce the subject? Will not a recapitulation or summary of the preceding chapters be necessary? If so, what form shall I give it?

2. Which method is best suited to the subject?

Is it the historic method? Is there in either the Old or the New Testament a story or a parable that may help to explain the subject? Is the synthetic or the analytic method preferable?

How am I to arrange the matter? What division shall I adopt? What previous knowledge on the part of the pupils does my explanation suppose? How am I to be sure that they possess it? What order shall I follow in the explanations? In the questions?

3. What proofs shall I adduce? Whence shall I draw them? What development shall I give them?

4. Particularly, what appropriate texts of Holy Scripture may be cited either as proofs of doctrine or as maxims of conduct?

5. What general impression should the catechism produce? What particular fruit or spiritual profit should be gathered from it? In what part of the lesson and in what way shall I make this clear to the pupils? What

examples shall I cite to give weight to this practical conclusion?

After having thus applied himself with all diligence to the preparation of his subject, the catechist should, if possible, go to the foot of the tabernacle and beg our Lord to fill his spirit with meekness and kindness for the pupils whom he is going to instruct.

He should also pray for them, for the success of his work should be the fruit of grace rather than the result of his personal efforts and industry.

In a word, let him labor with unwearied ardor and devotedness, that the knowledge of the doctrine of Jesus Christ may be more and more widely extended, penetrating, illumining and transfiguring all souls.

Blessed be God! Forever!

MODEL CATECHISMS.

The epithet "model" is not here to be taken in an absolute sense; for the aim of all-around methods in pedagogy is to train live teachers, not to shackle their initiative with the fetters of uniform types. Neither does "model" here signify that each of the lessons given is considered perfect in its kind. The principal aim in all of them is to be suggestive, to show how to combine diverse forms of teaching, and intersperse them with explanations, questions, and moral reflections.

This study of method is more particularly illustrated in the first two lessons that follow. The third lesson shows how, as the character of the class changes, not only the scope of the ideas is elevated and enlarged, but even the style is modified to suit either the grandeur of the subject or the more highly developed faculties of the pupils.

Only three lessons are given, and these form a concentric group on the Sign of the Cross. They help to illustrate how the treatment of the same subject must vary with the age and the development of the pupils. There is no attempt at a practical demonstration of *all* the methods and procedures indicated in the preceding sections of this book. The suitable presentation of such a variety of principles and directions would require a much larger book than the present *Manual*. Should there be a sufficient demand for it, a larger volume, with a greater number of "Model Catechisms," will be forthcoming.

I.

CATECHISM FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

PROGRAM.—*This program sums up the catechism lesson in three answers which the children should know by heart at the end of the instruction; they are not required to know them at the beginning of the lesson.*

1. *Make the sign of the cross.*

   + In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

2. *Whom should we think of when we make the sign of the cross?*

   When we make the sign of the cross we should think of God, and especially of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for us.

3. *What does God give us when we make the sign of the cross?*

   When we make the sign of the cross, God gives us His blessing.

TEACHER.—Dear children, I am going to speak to you to-day on the sign of the cross. The first thing a good Christian does on rising in the morning to begin the day is to make the sign of the cross. He makes it also at the beginning of his prayers and of all his principal actions. For these reasons it is the first thing that I should explain to you. Learn to make it well, that God may bless you in all your actions.

1. How do We Make the Sign of the Cross?

TEACHER.—Probably all of you know how to make the sign of the cross; your good mothers have taught you. But I shall

repeat the lesson to make sure that every one of you knows how to make it.

Look at me closely. I am going to draw a cross on the blackboard with this piece of chalk. To make a cross, I must draw two lines: first, a long line from top to bottom, and then a line crossing it from left to right. It is with my right hand that I draw this cross.

—All of you raise your right hand. Very good. Put down your hands.

—James, show me your right hand; your left hand; now your right hand again.

Repeat this exercise until all the children know their right hand. To shorten the time given to this in the catechism lesson, a few moments might be taken from another lesson, like writing: With which hand do you hold your pen when you write?

—With which hand do you make the sign of the cross? All of you raise the hand with which you make the sign of the cross.

—How many lines are necessary to draw a cross?

—Which is the first? Which is the second?

—Joseph, go to the blackboard and draw a cross. Do your best.

TEACHER.—But it is not on the blackboard that we make the sign of the cross, but on ourselves. Now, look at me, and I will show you how to trace these two lines of the cross on yourselves.

The teacher faces the pupils, places his left hand extended under his breast and with his right hand slowly traces the two lines while he continues to explain:

The first line begins at the forehead and goes down below the breast.

To make the second line I raise my right hand and touch the left shoulder with the tips of my fingers. It is just here that the second line begins. To complete it, I now carry the right hand over to the right shoulder, like this:

The teacher carries the right hand over to the right shoulder.

I will now make the sign of the cross again without saying anything, in order that you may watch me better.

The teacher then slowly makes the sign. Then he says:

When you make the sign of the cross, you must touch yourselves only four times—that is, at both ends of each line: first of all on the forehead, then on the breast, then on the left shoulder, and, last of all, on the right shoulder.

Now it is your turn. I want all of you to make the sign of the cross with me. But before we begin, let me see if everybody knows what parts to touch with his hand.

—Richard, point to your forehead, your breast.

—Albert, touch your left shoulder, your right shoulder, etc.

—Now let us all begin. Raise the right hand. Raise the left hand. Place your left hand across your breast, like me.

—Open the right hand, but keep the fingers together. Raise the right hand to the forehead, lower it to the breast, raise it to the left shoulder, move it to the right shoulder.

The teacher makes the sign of the cross with the pupils. The exercise is repeated two or three times by all of the pupils in concert, and then by some pupils individually.

TEACHER.—Very good. Everybody knows how to make the sign of the cross; now, you must learn to say the words. These words are beautiful. It is God's name that we pronounce; and we must always say this with great respect. Attention! I am going to say the words first.

The teacher then makes the sign of the cross very reverently, pronouncing the words distinctly.

—Who can say these words now?

The teacher picks out one of the older pupils who is well trained.

Patrick, come up here in front of the class and make the sign of the cross.

The boy stands up in front of the class, places his left hand across his breast, and then, with his eyes on the crucifix, makes the sign of the cross piously. Two or three other pupils may

also be called on to make the sign of the cross. After this the whole class makes it in concert with the teacher; then pupils grouped at desks or tables here and there are asked to make it, and, lastly, some of the children make it separately.

During all this time, the teacher keeps his eyes on the children to see that all make the sign correctly, and listens to hear whether they pronounce the words properly. In general, the pupils should look at the crucifix; but if any of them turn to the teacher to watch his hand, they should not be reproved.

Some teachers think they help the children by using the left hand to make the sign and by bringing it to the right shoulder before carrying it to the left. But this is a mistake; it tends to produce confusion. Keep strictly to the correct way. If necessary, the teacher might stand successively on the same line with each row of pupils, face in the same direction as they do, and make the sign with them.

If, after one or two drills, any of the younger pupils fail to make the sign of the cross properly, they can be handed over to some of the older and more competent pupils to be specially trained. These young pupil-teachers should be encouraged or rewarded in some way in proportion to their success.

2. Whom Should We Think of When We Make the Sign of the Cross?

TEACHER.—When we make the sign of the cross, our aim should be to honor God. This is why we should try to make it well and to say the words well. But if we only move the hand and say the words, we cannot honor God. It is the heart that God wants most of all. To please God when you make the sign of the Cross, you must have good thoughts in your mind and good sentiments in your heart.

—Whom should we honor when we make the sign of the cross?

—To honor God, what should we first of all try hard to do?

—What else should we try to do?

—Is God satisfied with the movement of your hand and the words on your lips?

—What does He want most of all?

—What should you have in your mind? In your heart?

TEACHER.—I will tell you how to do this. Try to remember it.

Whom should we think of when we make the sign of the cross?

When we make the sign of the cross, we should think of God.

—Tell me, Edmund, whom should we think of....?

All repeat this.

TEACHER.—Very good. Why should we think of God when we make the sign of the cross? It is because we say His name.

When you say the name of any one, you think of him; the name makes you think of him. When you say: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, you should think of God.

Why do we say: *In the name of the Father* | *and of the Son,* | *and of the Holy Ghost?* It is because there are three persons in God.

The first person is called *the Father.*

The second person is called *the Son.*

The third person is called *the Holy Ghost.*

—Let us begin again. Of whom should we think when we make the sign of the cross?

—Why should we think of God?

—Of whom do you think when you say your brother's name? Your father's name? Your mother's name?

—Of whom should you think when you say God's name?

—Why do you say: In the name of the Father, | and of the Son, | and of the Holy Ghost?

—How many persons are there in God?

—Which is the first person? The second? The third?

TEACHER.—And these three persons are only one God. That is why we say "*in the name,*" and say it only once.

When we make the sign of the cross, we must think of some one.

—Charles, stand up and make the sign of the cross piously.

—Very good. Who is fastened to the cross?

CHARLES.—God is fastened to the cross.

TEACHER.—That is true; God is fastened to the cross—the Son of God who became man for us. We call Him our Lord Jesus Christ. Sometimes we give Him a shorter name and call Him JESUS.

It is the same Jesus who was born a little child and laid in the manger. When He grew up, wicked men nailed Him to a cross. They *crucified* Him. This is why the cross with Jesus nailed to it is called a *crucifix.* When our Lord is not on the cross, it is simply *a cross;* but when He is fastened to it, it is *a crucifix.*

—When, then, is the cross called a crucifix?

—Why is the cross called a crucifix?

—Who was nailed to the cross?

—Who nailed Him to the cross?

TEACHER.—It is true that wicked men nailed our Lord to the cross; but it is also true that He willed to be nailed to the cross. He allowed it to be done. If He had not willed it, those wicked men would not have been able to crucify Him.

Why did Jesus will to die on the cross? It was because He loved us; it was to wash away our sins; it was to open the gate of heaven for us.

—When you look at the crucifix, whom should you think of?

—And when you make the sign of the cross?

—We have also said something else. Whom should you think of when you make the sign of the cross, Eugene? Joseph? etc.

—When we make the sign of the cross, we must think of God.

—Whom else should we think of?

—Why should we think of our Lord Jesus Christ?

TEACHER.—Now, we are going to say the whole answer. Listen to me; I will say it first, and you shall say it after me.

—Of whom should we think when we make the sign of the cross?

When we make the sign of the cross, we should think of God, and especially of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for us.

This answer is repeated several times by all in concert, then by rows or tables, and, lastly, by individual pupils.

TEACHER.—My dear children, since Jesus Christ has loved you so much that He gave up His life on the cross for you, you, in turn, should love Him with all your heart; you should often thank Him for being so good to you, and you should promise never to offend Him

These are the good feelings or sentiments that God should find in your hearts when you make the sign of the cross and look at the crucifix. Let me see, now, whether you remember all this.

—Since Jesus Christ has loved you so much, what should you do for Him? What else? And in the last place?

TEACHER.—We will now say a little prayer. You are to say it after me as you look at the crucifix:

O good Jesus, who didst willingly die for me on the cross, I love Thee with my whole heart; I thank Thee for all Thy goodness to me; I promise Thee to be good and nevermore to offend Thee.

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

The children repeat this prayer part by part, and they make the sign of the cross with the teacher.

3. What Does God Give Us When We Make the Sign of the Cross?

TEACHER.—My dear children, when you make the sign of the cross piously and pronounce the words well, and think

of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, God looks down upon you from heaven and is pleased with you. You have made on yourselves the sign of the cross of His Son. In looking at you, He sees in you a kind of likeness of His Son Jesus; He loves you and blesses you.

While you are making the sign of the cross and saying: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, God also raises His hand and makes the sign of the cross on you to bless you.

He gives you His blessing. This is something you must remember. I will say this once more, and then we shall all say it together.

What does God give us when we make the sign of the cross?

When we make the sign of the cross, God gives us His blessing.

The children are made repeat this several times.

—How should we make the sign of the cross in order that God may give us His blessing?

—Say it once more, Edmund.

—How should we say the words?

—Of whom should we think?

—What does God see in you when you make the sign of the cross well?

—Whose image and likeness are you?

—Are those who do not make the sign of the cross properly beautiful likenesses of our Lord?

TEACHER.—That is why God does not love them, nor does He bless them.

It is a great thing, my dear children, to receive God's blessing. By means of His blessing God forgives you your faults and drives away the devil. The devil can do no evil to a child who makes the sign of the cross well, for he is afraid of that child. The angels, on the other hand, love such a child with all their heart; they come close to him, and protect him as if he were their own little brother, who is one day to join them in heaven.

I am going to tell you a fine story.

Some time after the death of our Lord, His cross was buried in the ground. Two thieves had been crucified with Him, and their crosses were also buried in the ground with His. After many years nobody knew where our Lord's cross was.

Three hundred years after our Lord died there was a great empress named Helena. Her son was the Emperor Constantine. He was the first Christian emperor. St. Helena wanted to find our Lord's cross again. She had all of the top of Mount Calvary dug up where our Lord died. At last she found the three crosses together, the cross of our Lord and the crosses of the thieves. But no one could tell which was our Lord's cross. There was no mark or sign to show this.

But the bishop of the city was a saint. He was known as St. Macarius. And, as you will see, he found a way to tell which was our Lord's cross.

There was in Jerusalem at that time a very sick woman whom the doctors could not cure. The bishop prayed to God; then he commanded men to touch the woman with the crosses, one after another. They touched her with the first cross, and then with the second; but she was not cured. Then they touched her with the third cross, and at once she was cured. The third cross was our Saviour's cross.

See, now, how powerful the cross is; it drives away sickness. Many saints have cured sick people by only making the sign of the cross on them.

Let me see, now, whether you remember this beautiful story.

—What did the bishop do to find out which was our Lord's cross?

—How many crosses were there?

—Where were they?

—What saint tried so hard to find them?

—What was her son's name? etc.

TEACHER.—There is also a fine story about the Emperor Constantine. I will tell it to you another day.

Conclusion.

Since the sign of the cross is so pleasing to God, and draws down His blessing on you, you must make it often and always make it piously. Make it every morning when you get up. It is the best way to begin the day. Make it every night also when you go to bed, to keep the devil away from you during the night.

Make it often during the day, when you begin your prayers, your meals, your principal actions. And, in particular, make it when you go into church.

But you must always make the sign of the cross well, just as I have showed you how to do. Without that, God will not bless you, and the angels will not be pleased with you. On the other hand, the devil will laugh at you; he will be pleased with you; he will come to you to tempt you and to make you offend God. Now, you don't wish to have the devil near you. Very well, then, by making the sign of the cross piously you will be sure to drive him far away.

We will end this catechism by making the sign of the cross together once more as piously as we can. Stand up. Look at the crucifix, and think of our Lord who died for you.

+ *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

II.

CATECHISM FOR OLDER CHILDREN.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

TEACHER.—To-day, my dear children, I am going to speak of a religious action which you perform very often, and which some of you, perhaps, do not always perform as piously as you ought. This action is the making of the sign of the cross. I will explain to you the answers to these four questions of the catechism:

1. What is the sign of the Christian?
2. How do we make the sign of the cross?
3. Of what does the sign of the cross remind us?
4. When should we make the sign of the cross?

But, as you know all these answers by heart, I will also tell you many beautiful and useful things which you will take care to profit by.

1. What is the Sign of the Christian?

I will begin with a story.

When God created our first parents, He placed them in the Garden of Eden. There they found, to supply them with food, all sorts of trees bearing the finest fruit. At two different places, where the principal pathways crossed, God had planted two trees more magnificent than the rest, whose fruit was likewise more excellent. You know the names of these two trees. The first was called the *tree of knowledge of good and evil.* As you will see, it should rather have been called the *tree of trial;* and to-day we might even call it the *tree of death.*

—Why was this tree called the *tree of knowledge of good and evil?*

—Why might we call it the *tree of trial?*

—How did it become the *tree of death?*

TEACHER.—The second tree was called the *tree of life.* Its fruit was intended to preserve health to man in his innocence, to cure him of his wounds and sustain his life till God should call him, without dying, to the happiness of heaven.

You know what happened after Adam sinned. God drove him out of the earthly paradise, so that he could not eat of the fruit of the tree of life. Why try to preserve life for so long a time in the body of sinful man, who had already lost the life of the soul? The tree of life no longer served its purpose. It was necessary to have another tree, whose fruit would heal the wounds of the soul, restore it to life, and save it from hell. This tree is the *tree of salvation.* It has neither leaves nor flowers. It yields fruit, it is true; but only one fruit. Yet this fruit is sufficient to heal and to save all men, because it is God Himself, the Son of God made man for us. Only the good God could cure and save our souls.

—Who can tell me what the new tree of life was?

—What is the true fruit of life that hangs on it?

—Where was this tree of life planted?

—Why do we call it the tree of salvation?

—When do we eat of this fruit?

TEACHER.—You eat of it often, my dear pupils. I congratulate you on this, and I thank God with you for so great a gift.

But this fruit is so wonderful that it is not even necessary to eat of it in order to be cured and strengthened. Jesus, when dead on the cross, let water and blood flow from His heart. Their virtue is given to your souls through the sacraments, and especially through baptism and penance. It is thus that you have been purified and sanctified. In the same way you will be purified and sanctified again as often as you have need of it and wish it.

—What flowed from the heart of Jesus after He died on the cross?

—What did this water and this blood represent?

—By what means chiefly do you receive grace?

—What grace do you receive in baptism?

—What grace do you receive in the sacrament of penance?

—Where do these graces come from?

—Who merited them for us? How?

TEACHER.—There is something else that is extraordinary. As our mother Eve began to listen to the devil, and to sin even before eating the fruit of the tree of trial and while merely looking at it, so God wills that we should begin the work of saving our souls by looking at the tree of life and the fruit hanging on it.

Eve looked at the fruit as a greedy boy or girl might look at it, craving to get it and eat it. You ought to look at the fruit of life hanging on the tree of salvation with great love and with a great longing to receive the graces which Jesus wishes to bestow on you.

—In what other way is the tree of salvation like the tree of death?

—How did Eve begin to sin?

—How should you look upon Jesus nailed to the cross?

—What grace do you receive if you look upon Him piously?

TEACHER or PUPIL.—We receive pardon for our sins and all the other graces we need.

TEACHER.—You will understand this better very soon.

God loves so much this new tree of life which has brought salvation to the world, that He wishes to see representations of it everywhere. After the sin of Adam, He waited many ages before planting this tree on Calvary; but He wanted to have all sorts of copies of it. These are what we call *figures*. I will explain these in detail some other day. To-day I will take only two of them. You will see what beautiful lessons these two figures will give you.

Now for the first. You know that the Jews were unfortunate in Egypt and that Pharaoh would not let them leave

the country. God sent several terrible plagues upon the Egyptians, but these did not change the king. At last, since Pharaoh still refused, God resolved to make him give in, by sending a great misfortune on all the Egyptians. He sent an angel to kill the oldest son in every family.

But in order that this destroying angel might not enter the houses of the Jews, God ordered His servant Moses to draw a cross on the doorposts with the blood of a lamb. Do you see what a beautiful figure that is?

—What did the lamb represent?

—What did the crosses represent that kept away the destroying angel?

—When do we imitate the Jews?

—Whom do we drive away by the sign of the cross?

TEACHER.—The crosses traced with blood showed which houses belonged to the Jews and made known the servants of the true God.

—And what does the cross with which we sign ourselves make known?

—What is a Christian?

—What does being a Christian mean?

—What is the sign of a Christian?

—Why do you say that the sign of the cross is the sign of a Christian? etc.

TEACHER.—I will tell you the second figure a little later.

2. How Do You Make the Sign of the Cross?

Of all the images of the tree of life to be found throughout the world, the most beautiful, those most pleasing to God, are living images.

—Where are these living images to be found?

—When do you make yourselves living images of Jesus Christ?

PUPIL.—When we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross.

TEACHER.—That is correct. But if you wish God to see in

you a beautiful image of His crucified Son, you must make the sign of the cross well.

—How do you make the sign of the cross?

—Repeat, Walter.

—Make the sign of the cross, Bernard, Michael, Joseph.

TEACHER.—To make the sign of the cross well, three things are necessary, as we have already learned. See whether you remember them.

—What is the first?

PUPIL.—We must make the sign carefully.

—What is the second?

P.—We must pronounce the words properly.

—What is the third?

P.—We must think of God, and especially of our Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross for us.

TEACHER.—Very good. We could say the same thing in other words: we must have heartfelt devotion.

—Let us go over the matter once more. What is the first thing necessary to make the sign of the cross well? The second? The third?

—What do you mean by heartfelt devotion?

P.—We must think of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TEACHER.—Very true. But when you think of God and of our Lord, two sentiments ought to spring up in your hearts: love of our Lord Jesus Christ, who loved you so much as to die for you, and an ardent desire to resemble Him, to become a living image of Jesus crucified. When you make the sign of the cross, you must ask the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost to form this image and likeness in you, to make you good Christians, true disciples, living images of Jesus Christ.

—What sentiments should you have when you think of our Lord Jesus Christ?

—What should you ask of God when you make the sign of the cross?

TEACHER.—When you touch your forehead with the tips of your fingers, ask God to stamp the image of our Lord on your mind.

—When does your mind resemble that of Jesus Christ?

—When you touch your breast, what should you ask?

—When is your heart like the heart of our Lord?

—When you touch your shoulders, what should you ask?

—What is generally placed on the shoulders?

—Of what are loads or burdens a figure?

—What virtue should you practise in trials and afflictions?

—When is it, then, that your shoulders resemble those of our Lord?

TEACHER.—Now let us all make the sign of the cross piously together, to ask God to make us good Christians, beautiful images of our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at our Lord on the cross, and ask God for the grace to become like him. Slowly:

+ *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

You should always make it in that way, with the same piety, especially morning and evening. When you go into the classroom, or the church, make it with holy water.

3. Of What Does the Sign of the Cross Remind Us?

We have seen that the sign of the cross is the sign of the Christian; it is also the summary of his faith. For:

—What does the sign of the cross remind us of?

—Which are the principal mysteries of religion?

—How does the sign of the cross remind us of the Blessed Trinity?

What is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity?

—How does the sign of the cross remind us of the three divine persons?

—How do we show the unity of God?

—Why do we say "*In the Name*," and not in the names?

—How does the sign of the cross remind us of the mystery of the Redemption?

—What is the mystery of the Redemption?

—How are we reminded of the mystery of the Incarnation also?

TEACHER.—So, my dear pupils, when you make the sign of the cross, you make an act of faith in the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, in the mystery of the Incarnation, in the mystery of the Redemption, and in the whole Christian religion. In this way, you revive, renew, and strengthen your faith. At the same time, you beg God to apply to you the graces and the merits of all these mysteries. See, then, how many great things are included in this little act, and how important it is always to make the sign of the cross reverently.

4. When Should We Make the Sign of the Cross?

Now, we come to the second figure of the cross. The Jews had grumbled against God in the desert, because they were tired of their long journey. To punish them, God sent burning serpents among them. The men whom these serpents wounded died of the bite. Then the others repented and begged Moses to pray to God for them. Moses prayed, and God commanded him to plant a large cross and fasten to it a serpent of brass. All those who had been bitten, and who looked on this serpent, were cured.

—What was represented by the burning serpents that wounded the Jews?

—What did these bites represent?

—When are we bitten by the devil?

—What did the serpent of brass represent?

—What must you do when you have been so unfortunate as to offend God?

PUPIL.—We must look at the cross.

—What else must you do?

P.—We must make the sign of the cross piously and ask God to forgive us our sins. Then we will be cured.

—What is better still than being cured of a wound?

P.—Not to get wounded at all.

TEACHER.—Yes, my dear children, it is much better to drive the infernal serpent away as soon as he comes to tempt you.

—How can you drive him away?

P.—By looking piously at the cross or by making the sign of the cross.

TEACHER.—If you do not make the large sign of the cross, you can make the small sign on your forehead with your thumb to drive away bad thoughts, or on your heart, to crush wicked sentiments.

Since the sign of the cross is powerful enough to drive away the devil, we can call it a piece of armor, the *armor of salvation.* This makes three things which you have learned about the sign of the cross, and which you ought to remember. I will say them once more; then you will repeat them.

1. The sign of the cross is the *sign of the Christian;*
2. The sign of the cross is the *summary of our faith;*
3. The sign of the cross is the *armor of salvation.*

—Why is the sign of the cross the sign of the Christian?

—Why is the sign of the cross a summary of our faith?

—Why is the sign of the cross the armor of salvation?

—What enemy does the sign of the cross put to flight?

—Why does the sign of the cross put the devil to flight?

—When should you make the sign of the cross?

TEACHER.—Don't wait to make use of it until you are attacked. In the time of war no good soldier parts with his arms. From the reveille in the morning, he is never seen without them. Even at night he keeps them within reach. You should act in the same way.

Before ending this lesson, let us state once more the three principal effects of the sign of the cross which we have already explained:

1. The sign of the cross revives our faith;
2. The sign of the cross drives away temptation;

3. The sign of the cross obtains for us many graces from God.

—Repeat. What is the first effect of the sign of the cross?

—How is that?

—What is the second effect of the sign of the cross?

—Why?

—What is the third effect of the sign of the cross?

—Why does it obtain for us so many graces?

—What do we represent in God's eyes when we make the sign of the cross?

—What figures have we explained during this catechism?

PUPIL.—The cross with the blood of the Lamb, and the serpent of brass.

TEACHER.—The tree of death and the tree of life are also beautiful figures. Do not forget them.

Conclusion.

Since the sign of the cross is an action so pleasing to God and so useful to us, we ought to make it often and always make it well. Therefore, my dear pupils, often make use of this powerful weapon to drive the devil away. Make use of it also to draw down God's blessing on you. From morning till evening, and at night, when going to bed, don't fail to sign yourselves with this sign of salvation. In the daytime, at the beginning of your prayers and your principal actions, before and after meals, make use of this sign. On entering or leaving the church, sign yourselves with holy water. Always make the sign of the cross with great devotion. To encourage you in this practice, the Church has granted precious indulgences. Every time that you make the sign of the cross, you can gain fifty days' indulgence; and if you make it with holy water, you can gain one hundred days'.

Practise also of the little sign of the cross, made with the thumb on the forehead, the lips and the heart.[a] At the Gos-

[a] This sign should not be made with the thumb-nail, but with the fleshy part of the thumb.

pel in the Mass, we make all three of these; but they may also be made separately. Make the sign of the cross when you are tempted. It is not necessary for others to see it; God sees it, and He knows that you are asking His help. The devil also sees it and runs away in fright.

Whenever you hear men blaspheme or say bad words, make the little sign of the cross at once on your heart and say a short prayer like, "My God, I love Thee with my whole heart!" or simply, "My God!" or even "Jesus!" If you cannot make the sign of the cross because your hand is not free, the prayer alone will suffice. By it you tell God that, so far from consenting to evil, you hold it in horror; and, at the same time, you make some reparation for the evil which you could not prevent. Then God will look down on you with pleasure and bless you. His blessing will make you resemble His divine Son more closely, and, when you die, He will acknowledge you as His children and open heaven to you. But those who do not resemble Jesus He will not recognize. They are spoiled images. He will destroy them and cast them into the fire that burns forever.

III.

CATECHISM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

In our catechism of yesterday, we considered the symbols of our faith. We studied their usefulness and their composition. We recalled their history and indicated the use which the Church makes of them to-day in her public office. To-day, my dear friends, I wish to explain to you another, shorter symbol, which, although a summary of all the others, is none the less excellent. This is the sign of the cross. Because, from early childhood, you are accustomed to see and to make this sacred sign, because it has become a most ordinary action for you, do not imagine that it is of no importance, that it is utterly unworthy of your serious attention. On the contrary, it is one of the most beautiful and the most effective signs that I can bring to your notice. To succeed in this lesson as I wish, I will now ask God to grant us His holy blessing.

There are three ideas that I wish to develop for you:

1. The excellence of the sign of the cross;
2. The power and virtue of the sign of the cross;
3. The use and practice of the sign of the cross.

—On what subject are we to speak to-day?

—How are we going to divide it?

—Write on the blackboard the title and the three principal words of the division.

1. Excellence of the Sign of the Cross.

I will make no attempt to exhaust so vast a theme as this; I will simply touch upon three principal points:

1. The importance to you of the sign of the cross;

2. Its value in the eyes of God;
3. Its rôle in history.

I. Its Importance for You.—I might call this also its *intrinsic perfection as a symbol.* Let me explain.

The perfection of a symbol or sign is in direct ratio to the simplicity of the sign and the number of ideas which it represents.

Every word in our language is a symbol. It is the sign of an idea. The idea may apply to a greater or less number of objects, but, in general, it signifies only one kind of object. If some words have the misfortune to represent several different objects, they rather prove the poverty of our language and become a source of equivocation.

Let us now consider the sign of the cross. How wonderfully simple it is! A cross traced with the hand upon a person, or even with the thumb alone on the forehead, the lips and the breast.

The words, too, are very simple, but they make the sign more solemn, more explicit, but not more comprehensive. For:

—What mystery of faith is called to your minds when you make the sign of the cross on yourselves or any object?

—What is the mystery of the Redemption?

—What other mystery does the Redemption suppose?

—What is the mystery of the Incarnation?

—What other great mystery do you call to mind implicitly when you recite the definition of the Incarnation?

—What is the mystery of the Blessed Trinity?

—In what way is this mystery called to mind by the definition of the Incarnation?

Teacher.—See, my dear friends, how the sign of the cross calls to mind the three great mysteries that form the basis as well as the crown of Catholic dogma.

Many other truths are contained in the sign of the cross.

—Why did Jesus Christ die on the cross?

—Why did we need to be redeemed?

—What would have become of us if Christ had not redeemed us?

—If we will it, what fruit shall we derive from the Redemption?

TEACHER.—We might continue, but let us sum up.

Besides these three great mysteries, you will also find in the sign of the cross: the creation and the fall of man, his supernatural destiny, the necessity of grace, the last ends, heaven and hell. The sign of the cross is, therefore, an abridgment, an admirable summary of our holy faith.

It is also the summary of all Christian morality.

—What is a Christian?

—What does the word *Christian* mean?

—How did our Lord sum up the whole law? How did He distinguish His true disciples?

TEACHER.—All Christian morality is summed up in the doctrine of the cross: *If any one will come after me*, says our Lord, *let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me.*[1]

—Repeat this maxim, for it is very important.

We become true disciples of Jesus Christ in proportion as we strive to follow Him and to become like Him: *The predestinated must be conformed to Him*, says the Apostle St. Paul.[2] This resemblance should be most conspicuous in the principal mystery of His life, the mystery of the cross, the prelude and the condition of glory. *If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ.*[3]

What, then, is it that you do, my dear friends, when you sign yourselves with the sign of the cross?

1. You profess your faith in the whole body of Catholic doctrine.

2. At the same time you accept the moral code of the Gospel.

[1] Matt. xvi, 24. [2] Rom. viii, 29. [3] Rom. vi, 8.

You accept it with your whole mind: for that reason you raise your right hand to your forehead.

You accept it with your whole heart: for that reason you touch your breast.

You accept it with all your strength, and for that reason you raise your hand successively to the left and right shoulder. You offer your shoulders to bear courageously the yoke of the Christian law and all the trials of life.

And this protestation of faith, love, and fidelity you make in the name and under the protection of the Blessed Trinity, when you add the words:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

By the last word, *Amen*, or *So be it*, you ratify it anew and seal it with a seal which makes it final and everlasting.

You now understand, my dear friends, the importance of the sign of the cross for yourselves, and you see the extent of the doctrine contained in the simple question of the catechism which you have so often recited without reflection:

What is the sign of the Christian?

The sign of the Christian is the sign of the cross.

Before taking up the next topic, the section just explained may be reviewed by means of questions, insisting on these points: the simplicity of the sign, containing, as it does, an abridgment of faith as well as of Christian morality; its scope as an act of faith and an act of acceptance of the Gospel precepts.

II. Its Value in the Eyes of God.—I have dwelt at some length on the first part of this instruction, but you will have no occasion to regret this. For it is the firm foundation on which I must build the rest of the explanation.

Of what value is the sign of the cross in God's eyes? You have seen what the sign of the cross means for our limited and superficial minds and for our weak memory. But what does it represent to the infinite mind of God?

First of all, it represents the eternal life of the ineffable and adorable Trinity, whose name you pronounce. It repre-

sents the Word of God, the only Son, in whom the Father is well pleased, who came down from heaven to redeem the fallen human race. It represents the selfsame Son who was born of a Virgin, laid in a manger, and who, for love of His Father and of us, embraced a life of suffering and ignominy, and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It represents the terrible agony of Calvary, which even the heavens could not endure.[1] It represents those gaping wounds, those piercing cries by which Jesus implored pardon for us.[2] It represents the great Victim dying on the cross and continuing down the ages to immolate Himself upon our altars and in the person of millions of martyrs.

See, then, what each sign of the cross that you make represents to God, to the angels and the saints. What unspeakable complacency the Blessed Trinity takes in your action! What joy the angels experience! What thanks the saints offer, who have been redeemed in Christ's blood! Even now, my dear children, you catch a glimpse of the power and the virtue of the sign of the cross; but I must not anticipate. For the present, let us draw a practical conclusion:

—How should you make the sign of the cross?

Acknowledge in God's presence that if you have sometimes made it negligently, it was through giddiness and distraction, or through ignorance. Ask pardon for these faults. In future, I am sure that none of you will give way to wilful distractions, much less caricature so venerable and sacred a sign. Make these resolutions now.

III. Its Role in History.—The part played by the sign of the cross in history is too vast to be treated in detail. I can merely indicate it and suggest a few topics.

The history of the cross and of the sign of the cross is divided into two periods, which may be called, respectively, the period of *ignominy* and the period of *glory*. Yet, strange to say, the characteristics of these two periods, though distinct, are often intermingled in the course of the centuries.

[1] Matt. xxvii, 45-50; Mark xv, 33; Luke xxiii, 44. [2] Matt. xxviii, 50; Heb. v, 7.

The first period obviously extends from the beginning of the world to the coming of Jesus Christ. Yet, in a very true sense, it is prolonged even to our own day among peoples and tribes that have not embraced His doctrine.

The second began for Christians with the death of our Saviour, but was not emphasized until the conversion of Constantine. It became still more conspicuous after the victory of Heraclius over Chosroes and the recovery of the true cross, which the emperor himself bore triumphantly to Jerusalem (628).

First Period.—Is it not strange, my dear young friends, that nearly all tribes and peoples make the cross an instrument of punishment? By the tree man had sinned. By the tree or gallows all great criminals are punished. So great, indeed, is the ignominy of this punishment that Scripture attaches a curse to it: *He is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree.*[1] The Jews, however, did not crucify their criminals; they stoned them. It was only when Judea came under the sway of Rome that the punishment of the cross was introduced. Even then the Romans made use of it only on slaves, as a sign of contempt. If the culprit was a Roman citizen, he was beheaded.

So it came to pass, my dear young friends, that Jesus, the Just Man, the very personification of innocence, was confounded, because He so willed, with a mob of criminals, the scum not only of the Jews, but also of all the nations of the earth. He alone could drink this chalice, filled with the ignominy of the ages. It was impossible for suffering and humiliation to go further. He *debased Himself, taking the form of a servant,* says St. Paul; . . . *becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*[2]

Second Period.—He did, indeed, debase Himself, but God immediately raised Him up. Whence the Apostle continues: *God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name, which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth and in hell.*[3]

[1] Deut. xxi, 23. [2] Philip ii, 7, 8. [3] *Ibid.,* 9, 10.

The glory of the cross, therefore, begins with the Saviour's resurrection, but it is seen at first by none but the Apostles and the pious faithful, who are enlightened by the light of faith. Conspicuous among them is St. Paul: *God forbid that I should glory but in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ;*[1] and elsewhere: *I judged not myself to know anything among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*[2]

While this brilliant aurora was enlightening the growing Church, darkness still reigned everywhere else. Outside the Church the cross continued to be the most shameful and most dreaded instrument of punishment. Without doubt, God permitted this, in order to bestow on millions of martyrs the happiness of resembling their divine Model even in the outer circumstances of His passion.

St. Peter died upon the cross, but with his head down, out of respect for the cross of his Saviour.

St. Andrew, while yet afar off, saluted the cross on which he was to remain three days, preaching, until utterly spent, the saving doctrine of his divine Master.

Let us stop here. You know how the cross has taken possession of the world, how it adorns the crown of kings and the tiara of pontiffs; how it rises from the top of monuments and churches.

But, if the cross is the sign of the Christian, hatred of the cross is the mark of the infidel. To-day even nations reject the cross. We live in an age of apostasy. Nevertheless, power will not always remain in the hands of the wicked. The crosses that have been pulled down will be put up again; and on the last day there shall appear in the clouds the dazzling symbol of our salvation. The cross will then announce the coming of the sovereign Judge. At sight of Him, the just will sing hymns of joy, while the wicked, the enemies of the cross, will be dumbfounded and seized with terror. But you will not be among the wicked, my friends. You will all, I sincerely hope, be found among those who have loved the cross and remained faithful to it to the end.

[1] Gal. vi, 14. [2] 1 Cor. ii, 2.

This paragraph should be reviewed by recapitulatory questions, in order to fix the principal points in mind.

2. Power of the Sign of the Cross.

This topic may be treated under two heads:

1. The power of the sign of the cross over the heart of God;

2. The power of the sign of the cross against the devil.

The power of the sign of the cross over the heart of God has no bounds.

—Why?

—What can it obtain for us?

PUPIL.—His graces and blessings.

What do you represent in God's eyes when you make the sign of the cross?

TEACHER.—Our Lord then unites His prayers to yours. God can refuse Him nothing.

Against the devil the sign of the cross exercises a power that is at once formidable and sovereignly efficacious.

—How did Jesus Christ triumph over the devil?

TEACHER.—The dog fears the stick that has struck him; the conquered soldier dreads the weapons that have inflicted on him injury or defeat. And so it is with the devil. Conquered by the Saviour's cross, he dreads the cross more than all things else.

For the Christian, on the other hand, the sign of the cross is both a source of protection and a weapon of salvation.

In the history of the Old Testament you will find several figures of the future power of the cross:

1. To keep away the destroying angel, the Jews marked the side-posts and the door-posts of their houses with crosses made with the blood of the lamb.[1]

2. In the desert, by God's order, Moses lifted up the brazen serpent which was fastened to a cross. The Israelites who had been bitten by the burning serpents, and who looked upon the brazen serpent, were cured.[2]

3. Still more expressive figures are: Joshua combating the

[1] Exod. xii, 7, 13. [2] Numb. xxi, 6-9.

Amalecites, and Moses praying with arms extended in the form of a cross. Whenever Moses let his arms fall through fatigue, the Amalecites gained; as often as he raised them again, the Jews triumphed.[1]

4. In a vision the prophet Ezechiel saw, in a time of public calamity, death sparing those whom an angel had marked on the forehead with the Hebrew letter *Thau* (+), which has the form of a cross.[2]

Under the new law the power of the sign of the cross shone forth in a thousand ways. It will be sufficient to recall the *Labarum of Constantine*, with its device: *In this sign thou shalt conquer.* His victory marked the end of the great persecutions, and began a new era for the Church.

Innumerable miracles have been wrought by the sign of the cross. By it the saints healed the sick, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and even raised the dead to life.

A series of review Socratic questions should be asked on this article.

3. Practice of the Sign of the Cross.

I shall not speak to you, my dear friends, of the frequent use that the Church makes of the sign of the cross in her office. You have only to watch the priest at the altar. He signs himself with the sign of the cross. With the sign of the cross he blesses water and incense. With the sign of the cross he blesses the host and the chalice, sometimes separately, sometimes together, in order the better to indicate the oneness of the sacrifice and the victim.

In the other offices also the sign of the cross occurs frequently, and at this there is no occasion for astonishment. Like God Himself, the Church sees Jesus Christ everywhere, and Jesus Christ means chiefly His cross and passion.

Let me speak to you, then, of the sign of the cross which you yourselves make. Let us consider:

1. The exterior form of the sign of the cross;
2. The interior devotion by which it should be animated;

[1] Ezech. xvii, 11, 12. [2] Ezech. ix, 4.

3. The circumstances in which you should make the sign of the cross.

All these points may be brought out by means of questions asked according to the Socratic method. Herewith only a mere summary of the doctrine is presented.

I. Exterior Form.—The two chief forms are the large sign of the cross and the small sign of the cross.

The large, or *Latin*, sign of the cross is in use in Italy, England, France, Belgium, the United States, Canada, etc.

The small sign of the cross is made with the right thumb on the forehead, the lips, and the heart, while one says the words: + *In the name of the Father,* + *and of the Son,* + *and of the Holy Ghost.*

In church, it is made also at the beginning of the Gospel, but without any special form of accompanying words. In certain parts of Germany this sign is so much in use as even to be called the *German* sign of the cross.

In Spain and in all the countries once colonized by this Catholic nation, the sign of the cross is more complicated; for it comprises the two signs just described. The Spaniard begins with the small sign, saying: + *By the sign of the holy cross,* + *from our enemies* + *deliver us, O Lord, our God.* Then he immediately makes the large sign, saying: + *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Then he forms a cross by placing the thumb of the right hand over the forefinger, and as he kisses it he says, *Amen.*

In external practice every one should conform to the custom of his country. The important thing is always to make the sign of the cross with all possible reverence. The reasons for this you now understand.

II. The Interior Devotion which should animate you when making the sign of the cross comprises all those sentiments explained to you in the first part of this lesson. Let me recall them briefly:

1. A lively faith in all the mysteries of our religion;

2. A full and entire acceptance of the precepts of Christian morality;

3. An ardent desire to resemble our Lord Jesus Christ and

to share in the merits of His Passion, in order to be one day glorified with Him.

III. If you possess these sentiments, my dear friends, you will delight in making the sign of the cross often; you will make it to draw down upon you God's special grace and blessing on every important occasion—when you wake in the morning, when you go to bed at night, when you begin and when you end your prayers and your other principal actions. With the sign of the cross you will bless your meals and thank God for them. In your spiritual combats you will make skilful use of this weapon. By means of it you will drive off the devil and arm yourselves with the strength of God. His grace will develop in your souls, and with it will grow your supernatural likeness to His divine Son Jesus. The cross which is so often signed upon your person, your forehead, your lips, and your heart, will become for you the seal of the living God, of which the Apostle St. John speaks,[1] a sign by which you will be recognized as elect of God, a sign that will secure you admittance to the heavenly city.

May the cross of Jesus guard you all the days of your life, and, at the end, in the hour of your last agony, may the sign of the cross be the last movement of your dying hand, the triumphant gesture that will admit you to everlasting glory.

+ *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

[1] Apoc. vii, 3.

APPENDIX.

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Piux X, in his Encyclical, dated April 15, 1905 (IV), orders that "there be canonically established in every parish the association commonly known as the Society of Christian Doctrine, by means of which, especially where the number of priests is small, pastors may secure lay help in the teaching of catechism." He adds that "these lay teachers should apply themselves to their task out of zeal for the glory of God, as well as from a desire to gain the rich indulgences lavishly granted by the Roman Pontiffs."

Pious persons will consider it a duty to enter into these views of the Holy Father by enrolling themselves in the parish confraternity. It would be hard to understand how zealous Christians, devoted to the excellent work of religious teaching, would not be eager to gain the spiritual riches which the Church so liberally offers them.

Besides the benefit accruing from indulgences, the grouping of catechists into associations procures for them personal direction and encouragement. It also gives to the work a cohesion, an organization, and a force which greatly increase its success. In place of isolated and often partly barren efforts, the associate finds at his call a combination of forces and a regular and continual stream of mutual assistance, which brace the will, assure regularity of work and allow the formation of fruitful movements, such as special retreats, normal courses for catechists, etc.

The Roman Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine.

The origin of this pious association goes back to the pontificate of Paul IV. At that time several zealous priests and

laymen, moved by the exhortations of the Council of Trent, and by the example of St. Charles Borromeo, united for the teaching of catechism not only in private on working days, but also publicly in churches on Sundays and holydays. The celebrated Cardinal Baronius, in his youth, and St. Joseph Calasanctius were among the first members of this congregation, which has spread and prospered from that day to this.

Its aim is to "promote and regulate, by all possible means, the religious instruction of the people by the teaching of catechism."

Consequently: 1. It busies itself with the founding of catechetical schools, taking care to distribute them according to the best interests of the population.

2. It superintends the religious instruction, in order to have it given with uniform method and by competent teachers. It, therefore, encourages the formation of higher courses of religion for the training of catechists. Through its efforts also Examination Commissions are named and two grades of diplomas awarded to those candidates for the position of catechist who have given proof of their capacity.

3. It organizes competitions among the catechetical schools of Rome, and distributes prizes to those pupils who have particularly distinguished themselves.

This Archconfraternity has power to affiliate all such parochial confraternities as ask for this favor and agree to abide by the rules and regulations. It has been enriched with many indulgences, especially by Popes St. Pius V and Paul IV.[a]

Indulgences Granted to the Roman Archconfraternity of Christian Doctrine.

PLENARY INDULGENCE.—1. On the day of reception into the Confraternity and at the hour of death.

2. Every year on the principal feast of the Confraternity (St. Peter, June 29th), and on the feast of the local Patron.

[a] For further information, consult the *Manual of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine,* published by The Sunday Companion Publishing Company, 10 Barclay Street, New York.

Both of these indulgences are subject to the ordinary conditions of confession, communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

INDULGENCES OF THE STATIONS OF ROME.—On the days assigned these may be gained by: (*a*) the members of the Archconfraternity, if they teach catechism on these days; (*b*) the faithful, if they attend the catechetical instruction; (*c*) the Visitors of the Archconfraternity who, on these days, pay their official visit to the catechetical schools.

PARTIAL INDULGENCES.—*Indulgence of ten years* to those associates who go out of the city to teach catechism in the suburbs, in villages or hamlets.

Indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines: 1. To those associates who confess and communicate on the day on which the Confraternity is established in their locality.

2. The same indulgence once a month on the condition of confession and communion.

An indulgence of seven years: (*a*) to priests who are associates when they preach or teach in a church or chapel of the Confraternity; (*b*) to associates who go through the city to gather an audience of children or adults for the religious instruction; (*c*) to associates who accompany the Blessed Sacrament when it is brought to the sick.

An indulgence of three years to those who accompany to the cemetery the body of a deceased associate, or assist at the office celebrated for him, or pray for the repose of his soul.

An indulgence of two hundred days: (*a*) to all associates who bring or send some one to hear catechism; (*b*) to those who assist at the religious discussions customary in the schools of the association; (*c*) to those who visit sick members; (*d*) to those who assist at the exercises or reunions of the Confraternity, or at its processions when authorized by the bishop.

An indulgence of one hundred days to those associates who, whether in public or in private, teach catechism on a working day.

Indulgences Granted by the Sovereign Pontiffs to the Faithful Who Teach or Study Catechism.

PLENARY INDULGENCE.—On the feasts of the Nativity and the Resurrection of our Lord, and on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, to those adults who have taken part assiduously in this pious exercise, either by studying or by teaching catechism; subject to the ordinary conditions (Clement XII, Brief of May 16, 1736).

PARTIAL INDULGENCES.—*An indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines* to adults every time that, after confession and communion, they take part in the pious exercise of catechism when it is taught to children in a church or oratory (Clement XII. Brief cited above).

An indulgence of seven years to teachers who, on feast days, conduct their pupils to the Christian Doctrine class and teach them catechism (Paul V. October 6, 1607).

An indulgence of three years, on all the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, to the faithful of whatever age who are accustomed to assemble in school or church to hear the Christian Doctrine. They should have already gone to confession. If they go to communion, the indulgence is of seven years (Pius IX. Rescript S. L., July 10, 1877).

An indulgence of one hundred days to teachers who, on the ordinary days, explain Christian Doctrine in their own school (Paul V. October 6, 1607).

An indulgence of one hundred days to fathers and mothers every time that, in their own home, they develop or explain Christian Doctrine to their children, their servants, or their household (Paul V. Brief already cited).

An indulgence of one hundred days to the faithful who study catechism for a half hour, either to learn it themselves or to teach it to others (Paul V. Same Brief).

An indulgence of three hundred days to all those who instruct, or who are preparing to instruct, youth in a Christian manner, as often as they say the invocation:

Teach me goodness, and discipline, and knowledge; for I have believed Thy commandments.—Ps. cxviii, 66 (Pius X. May 14, 1908).

Indulgences Granted for the Feast of First Communion.

On July 12, 1905, with a view to encourage the solemnizing of First Communion, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius X, deigned to grant the following indulgences, applicable to the faithful departed:

PLENARY INDULGENCES.—1. To all children on the day of their first communion. Conditions: confession and prayers for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

2. To their blood-relatives to the third degree who assist at the First Communion. Conditions: confession, communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff.

PARTIAL INDULGENCE.—*Seven years and seven quarantines* to all the faithful who, being at least contrite in heart, assist at the First Communion.

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